TRAVELS IN MOAB AMMON & GILEAD

ALGERNON HEBER-PERCY

BERTRAND SMITH
"ACRES OF BOOKS"
140 PACIFIC AVENUE
LONG BEACH 2
CALIFORNIA

MOAB, AMMON,

AND

GILEAD,

BY

ALGERNON HEBER-PERCY,

AUTHOR OF A VISIT TO "BASHAN AND ARGOB," &C.,

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS AND A MAP.

MARKET DRAYTON:
BENNION, HORNE, SMALLMAN & Co., LTD.,

LONDON:
SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, HAMILTON, & Co., LTD.
4, STATIONERS' HALL COURT, E.C.

1896.

DS
153.2
P43

TO

MY MOTHER,

TO WHOSE LOVING CARE

I OWE ALL MY EARLY INSTRUCTION

IN THE BIBLE.

PREFACE.

"Ye are intreated . . . . to read with favour and attention, and to pardon us, if in any parts of what we have laboured to interpret, we may seem to fail in some of the phrases," . . . . for "A slip on a pavement is better than a slip with the tongue."—*The Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach.*

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

PAGE.

Arrival at Jerusalem—Start for Moab—The going up to Adummin—The Brook Cherith—Oreb and Zeeb—The Jordan Valley—Abel-Shittim—Tell Kafrein—Dolmens—The Fountains of Pisgah—Nebo and Pisgah—Stone Disc—The Plains of Moab - - - - - - - - - - 15

CHAPTER II.

Medeba—Hameideh Escort—Baal-meon—Bedouin Doctoring—Wady Zerka Main—Jebel Attarus—Attaroth—Machaerus—Kiriathaim—Wady Waleh—Dibon - - - - - - - - - 34

CHAPTER III.

Aroer—The River Arnon—The Road of Arnon—Umm Rasas—Amouskera—Macadeben Nasr Allah—Karyet Felha—Wady Waleh—Pariah Dogs—Performing Goat—Medeba—Ostrich Eggs—Nettil—Ancient Khan at Umm Welid—Umm Uxier—Ant-lion- - - - - - - - 46

CHAPTER IV.

Heshbon—Elealeh—The Fish Pools of Heshbon—Bedouin Shepherds—Forest Country—Arak el Emir, the Prince's Cliff, and the Palace of Hyrcanus—The Sons of Tobiah—Wady es Sir—Columbarium cut in live rock- - - - - 59

CHAPTER V.

Circassian Village of Es Sir—Rabbath of Ammon—Siege of Rabbath by Antiochus—Source of the River Jabbok—Sassanian Building—Dolmens and Menhirs—Rock-cut Tomb - - - - - - 68

CHAPTER VI.

Es Salt—Jebel Osha—El Bukeia—The River Jabbok—Peniel—Jerash—Magnificent Ruins—Absence of Hassan—Inscriptions—A Bedouin Present—Hassan's Return—A Dangerous Experience—Sarcophagi - - - - - - - - - 84

CHAPTER VII.

A quiet Sunday—Mizpeh in Gilead—The land of Tob—Jephthah—Remtheh—Remtheh Mizpeh—Ramoth Gilead—Beni Sahr Camels—Whirlwinds—Syrian Goats—A disturbed Night—The Haj Road—Ancient Aqueduct—Harvest Scene—Edrei—El Mezarib—Strolling Players—Damascus Meiselun—Lebanon—Beyrout - - - - - 101

ILLUSTRATIONS.

MAP.

AUTHOR'S ROUTE MAP - - - - - *to face p. 1*

ILLUSTRATIONS.

ESCORT OF 'ADWAN BEDOUINS - - - ,, 9

FOUNTAINS OF PISGAH, AYUN MUSA - - ,, 10

DISC STONE, GARB EL KEFEIR - - - ,, 14

BEDOUINS, MACHAERUS - - - - ,, 28

TOWER UMM RASAS - - - - - ,, 38

PERFORMING GOAT, BEAR AND MONKEY - ,, 42

PALACE OF HYRCANUS - - - - ,, 51

ARAK EL EMIR - - - - - - ,, 52

WINDOW AT ARAK EL EMIR - - - ,, 54

COLUMBARIUM, WADY ES SIR - - - ,, 57

,, ,, ,, - - - ,, 59

TOWER BY THE RIVER JABBOK, RABBATH OF AMMON - - - - - - ,, 64

TEMPLE RABBATH OF AMMON - - - ,, 66

SASSANIAN BUILDING, RABBATH OF AMMON ,, 68

TRIUMPHAL ARCH, JERASH - - - ,, 74

FORUM, JERASH - - - - - - ,, 76

RUINED BUILDING, JERASH - - - - ,, 78

TEMPLE OF THE SUN, JERASH - - - ,, 82

Sea of Galilee
Mezerib
Tyre
Ramoth Gilead ?
Tibneh
Tob ?
Wadi Kefrein
Jebel Kefrein
Suf
Mizpeh of Gilead ?
Gerasa
Jerash
River Jordan
Mount Gilead
Ain Rubia
Jebel Osha
Es Salt
Rabbath of Ammon
Philadelphia
Circassian Village
Columbarium
Tyrus
Araket Emir
Bridge
Tell Kefrein
Peole of Hashbon
Elealeh
Heshbon
Ayun Musa
Jalul
Pisgah
Nebo
Garbal Refeir
Umm Uxier
Medeba
Umm Welid
Natsil
Mt Peor
Baal Meon
Callirrhoe
W Zerka Ma'in
DEAD SEA
Alaroth
Jebel Attarus
Ataarus
Machaerus
Karyes Feiha
Macadeben Near
Amouskera
Tower
Kiriathaim
Umm Rasas
Dibon
Aroer
Jebel Shihen
English Miles

MOAB, AMMON, & GILEAD.

CHAPTER I.

Arrival at Jerusalem—Start for Moab—The going up to Adummin—The Brook Cherith—Oreb and Zeeb—The Jordan Valley—Abel-Shittim—Tell Kafrein—Dolmens—The Fountains of Pisgah—Nebo and Pisgah—Stone Disc—The Plains of Moab.

HAVING in previous years travelled through Palestine and Syria, we determined to, if possible, complete our knowledge of the general aspect of the land of the Israelites by a tour embracing the country from the river Arnon to Hauran.

Leaving England towards the end of April, we arrived at Jaffa, May 5th, 1895, and awoke next morning to find ourselves again in our much-loved camp. After the horrors of the night during the providentially short passage between Port

Said and Jaffa, and the heat, discomfort, and weariness of the tedious railroad journey here, it was delicious to find one's self in a clean, comfortable bed, gazing through the widely-flung back tent door at daylight breaking on the City of Jerusalem. Our camp is delightfully pitched among the olive trees in the Greek Patriarch's Ground, on the hill-side facing the Bab-el-Khalil, the Jaffa gate.

What a fascination this city exercises on all men. Though this is our third visit, we feel its influence as strongly as ever. "Always the object of tender pity and reverence, always the centre of some conflict, the scene of some religious contention. Frequent as were the sieges of the city in the olden days, they have been more frequent since. Titus took Jerusalem, Barcochebas took it, Julius Severus took it, Chosroes, Heraclius, Omar, the Charezmians, Godfrey, Saladin, Frederick, all took it by turns, all after hard fighting, and with much slaughter. There is not a stone in the city but has been reddened with human blood; not a spot but where some hand to hand conflict has taken place; not an old wall but has echoed back the shrieks of despairing women. Jew, Pagan, Christian, Mahommedan, each has had his turn of triumph,

occupation, and defeat; and were all those ancient cemeteries outside the city emptied of their bones, it would be hard to tell whether Jew, or Pagan, or Christian, or Mahommedan would prevail. For Jerusalem has been the representative sacred place of the world; there has been none other like unto it, or equal to it, or shall be, while the world lasts; so long as men go on believing that one spot of the world is more sacred than another, because things of sacred interest have been done there, so long Jerusalem will continue the Holy City."* The roadway on the far side of the ravine now began to be occupied by strings of laden mules, and camels with burdens pitching on their backs, as if meeting a long ground swell, as they paced with soft, silent, leisurely steps towards the gate. Turkish soldiers were on active duty taking something for themselves from each peasant's load of merchandise for the city, even from the humble bundle of roots dug up for fuel.

After a pleasant visit to our old friends, the Dickson's, we called on His Excellency Ibrahim Pasha, Mutesarif of Jerusalem, who amused me by saying there were only two ways of escaping fever in this treacherous climate; one way was to

* The History of Jerusalem, by W. Besant and E. Palmer.

take quantities of quinine, and ruin your digestion, and the other, always to wear more clothes than you could possibly support. The Pasha was perfectly right. The second the sun disappears, the chill that ensues is especially baneful to the tourist, dressed so that he may not feel the heat of the tropical noon-day.

After re-visiting that most interesting site, the temple area, we rode down to the new excavations made by Dr. Bliss, showing the lines of the ancient wall by Siloam, and so back to camp.

Tuesday, May 7th. We left Jerusalem about one p.m., our party consisting of my wife, my youngest son, and myself, the camp and servants having preceded us, and skirting round the walls past the Damascus Gate, crossed the Kedron near Gethsemane, and followed the carriage road towards Jericho. The sun was very hot, but at our backs, and umbrellas were very necessary. On arriving at Bethany we were joined by the so-called Bedouin escort. It is wise to engage them, otherwise they, very naturally, arrange that your tents shall be, if possible, robbed by themselves, to demonstrate the necessity of employing them. The road, like many others in the East, is excellent at starting and well constructed, but

falls off sadly as you descend, until, towards the foot of the hills, it becomes unsafe, and finally impassable for carriages with any one in them.

At the traditional Khan of the Good Samaritan we stopped for a cup of coffee and a glass of good Pilsner beer, and were much amused by a large party of Germans, of all ages except youth, who were coming, under the charge of one of the worst class of dragomen, to see Jericho, Jordan, and the Dead Sea. There must have been about thirty of them, and all being obviously quite unaccustomed to riding, were prostrate with fatigue and heat, some of the older ones being so exhausted that they had to be absolutely lifted off their horses at the Khan. The rest of the ride was cooler, the sun beginning to sink below the Judean hills at our back, and the scenery was finer; we descended the "going up to Adummin," the boundary between Benjamin and Judah. The Brook Cherith on our left, with deep precipitous sides, ran some 500 feet below us; the bottom, where the water is, covered with vegetation; what looked like the line of a goat-track against the far side was being followed by a loaded mule, the faint sound of the muleteer's song floated across the ravine, and beyond us, bathed in pink and violet light, lay our promised land, the little-

known hills of Moab. As we descended we saw Elisha's fountain, and then to the northward the hills "Osh-el-Ghoreb" and "Tuweil-edh-Dhib," Oreb and Zeeb—The Raven's Nest and The Wolf's Peak. By the inhabitants of the former place, the "People of the Raven," Elijah was no doubt supplied with "bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening," till the brook dried up.

The heat in the Ghor, as the Valley of Jordan is called, was great, the depression being, I believe, the greatest known on the earth's surface —the Dead Sea level being 1312 feet below the Mediterranean Whilst at dinner in our tent, we heard, after he had left, that an old German gentleman, lost from the party we had passed, had come to our tents. Najm, our dragoman, sent a muleteer with him to conduct him to his own party, half-an-hour away. The muleteer reported his ultimate safe arrival, totally exhausted. We started at 6 a.m., after a sleepless night from the heat, with an escort of 'Adwan, crossed Jordan by the rough wooden bridge, and riding through the tangled brake and vegetation lining its borders, came out on the plain, bare of everything except a few thorny bushes. The land looks excellent and rich, but here and there

is covered with an alkaline efflorescence. Two hours' ride brought us to cultivated ground, with fine crops of barley, ripe for harvest, which the 'Adwan were busily cutting; rills of running water shewed the means by which the land had been rendered fertile, as in the old days, when the City of Palms stood in the luxuriant plain described by Josephus. This, without question, must be "the Plain of Moab by Jordan near Jericho," where the Children of Israel "pitched by Jordan, from Beth-Jesimoth even unto Abel-Shittim (or the Plains of the Acacias) in the Plains of Moab." We tried to imagine the then fertile plain covered with the thousands of Israel.

They had been taught by Hobab, the Midianite, how to encamp,* and their black Bedouin tents, like flocks of the black kids of Syria,† ranged away as far as the eye could reach. To the North, commanded by Ahiezer, Pagiel, and Ahira, under the Eagle Standard of Dan, 157,600 men of Dan, Asher, and Naphtali. To the East, led by Nashon, Nethaneel, and Eliab, under the Lion Emblem of Judah, 186,400 men of Judah, Issachar, and Zebulon. To the South, under Elizer, Shelumial, and Eliasaph, and the Ensign the figure of a Man, the Emblem

* Numbers x., 31. † I. Kings xx., 27.

of Reuben, 151,450 men of Reuben, Simeon, and Gad. To the West, under the Orders of Elishama, Gamaliel, and Abidan, beneath the Ox Standard of Ephraim, 108,100 men of Ephraim, Manasseh, and the war-like tribe of Benjamin, with their war-cry, "After thee, Benjamin."

The tabernacle in the centre, with the Sons of Gershon on its immediate West; the Sons of Kohath on the South; and the Sons of Merari on the North; and on the East that marvellous Leader, Moses,—trained as he was, Josephus tells us, a general of the Egyptian Armies,* and Aaron and his sons.

Consider the drill, the method, and order of moving this vast mass of 603,550 fighting-men, their women and children, waggons, tents, flocks, and herds. Imagine the silver trumpet's alarm, and Judah, Issachar, and Zebulon moving off, followed by the Sons of Gershon and Merari, carrying the structure of the Tabernacle, ready to have it set up again to receive the Ark and Holy Things; a second trumpet call, and the Army Corps of Reuben, Simeon, and Gad take up the march.

---

* Josephus Ant., Book II., Chap. 10.

ESCORT OF ADWAN BEDOUINS.

Moses pronounces the invocation, "Rise up, Lord, and let Thine enemies be scattered, and let them that hate thee flee before Thee."

And then the Kohathites bear forward the Ark of the Covenant of God, and Altar, and Sacred objects wrapped in blue and other coloured linen, and covered with their waterproof coverings of seal-skins, by Aaron and his Sons; a third echoing blast—Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin leave their ground; Dan, Asher, and Naphtali standing to their arms, to form the rear-guard of the colossal procession.

On our way, an 'Adwan Sheik came up, and was presented to us as Sheik Fa-ad, the well-known Sheik Goblan's son. We halted at Tell Kafrein, under the foot hills of the mountains, near a stream brilliant with flowering oleanders, with which our servants decorated our dining tent. In the afternoon we rode out, and ascended the low hills, and after some search were successful in finding some extremely perfect dolmens. I cannot presume to give an opinion as to their original purpose. They may have been used for the worship of Chemosh. They, and we have seen since a great many, have rather disappointed me as to size; they are great stones, but not

colossal; and they are grouped frequently together, giving one at first the idea of ancient graves, rather than altars for any worship.

But burials, in the proper sense, that is, of putting the body under ground, they can not have been used for, as all these dolmens were built on the bare live rock. Some of them are like the Giants' Graves at Rolde, in Friesland, supposed to be alluded to by Tacitus, as shewing the past grandeur of the Cimbri.* From thence to our tents. A second stifling night, and no sleep, made us all, servants included, suffer much; however, before daylight, we were in the saddle, ascending into the delicious cool air of the mountains of Moab, and about eleven o'clock arrived at Ayun Musa, the Wells of Moses (the old Fountains of Pisgah), at the head of a delightfully cool ravine. We decided to wait for our camp, and get the rest we all needed, under the shadow of a great rock—with the sound of water, and of wind through a fig-tree, and the calling of 'Adwan shepherds as they arrived with their charges, in an endless string to water at these picturesque and copious springs. A curious horizontal double-strata of rock dams the headwaters of this spring: the rock is hollowed out

* Tacitus Germ. 37.

THE FOUNTAINS OF PISGAH, AYÛN MÛSA.

into a cave below, and the double-strata looks exactly like courses of mason's work. Here we camped; and after thoroughly enjoying a good night, with the cool mountain air, sent our tents and baggage direct to Madeba — the ancient Medeba—with an escort of Bedouin, whilst we ourselves went on under the guidance and protection of Sheik Ali. The ascent from the Springs is steep and stony at first, but improves as you get higher. There are two distinct summits—one called by the Bedouin, Neba, with a dolmen, not a good specimen, near its summit; the other called Siaghah, with remains of the ruins of a considerable temple. Neba is of course Nebo, and Siaghah, Pisgah.

We first ascended Neba, and then Pisgah. The view from the latter is, even as we saw it with the Judean hills faint with mist, magnificent, and if the Scriptural word "unto" is translated "towards"* exactly describes the vista; a deep valley to the South separates Siaghah and Neba from the range called El Maslubiyeh, with its ridge Minyeh projecting towards the Dead Sea. This range Conder identified with the first point Balak took Balaam to, "the High places of Baal," when he brought him here to curse Israel. Nebo

* Deut. xxxiv., 1, 2, 3.

was his second point. And the ridge Minyeh, from Meni, the wife of Peor; "Peor that looketh towards Jeshimon," the last place from whence he saw the uttermost part of Israel, and standing near the seven altars (Conder discovered traces of sacred rings here)* uttered that marvellously beautiful prophesy; for when Balak's anger was kindled, and he smote his hands together, Balaam said, "I shall see him, but not now, I shall behold him, but not nigh; there shall come a star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel and shall smite the corners of Moab."† Imagine the view he saw when "he lifted up his eyes" and saw Israel abiding in his tents according to their tribes.

What a belief Balak must have had in Balaam's supernatural power. He had twice sent his lords all the way to summon him from the far-distant Euphrates. Widely spread traditions identify Balaam with Lokman, the magician, the Æsop of the East, perhaps Æsop himself. That he was only a wizard compelled by God to bless when he would have cursed, is certainly not the case. Balaam knew and confessed Jehovah when the ambassadors of Balak first came to him.‡ He

* "Heth and Moab," by C. R. Conder, R.E., p. 136.
† Numbers xxiv., 17. ‡ Numbers xxii., 8.

describes himself as one who "heard the words of God," had the knowledge of the most High," "saw the vision of the Almighty."* Undoubtedly there still lingered near the Euphrates some remnants of the ancient religion of Terah and his ancestors; that true religion for the sake of which Abraham left his father's house when he saw that its purity was being smothered by the early priest-craft that began to represent the attributes of the Almighty under figures understood by them, but kept secret from the uninitiated.

On the summit of Pisgah are some Byzantine ruins; rude and much worn columns lie about, the entrance has been to the east, some caves have been excavated below, and there are two caves—now inhabited by wild pigeons—between the summits of Nebo and Pisgah. A wolf ran across our track as we ascended; the surrounding hills are rocky, wild, and steep, but arrived at the summit we found we were on the elevated edge of a lofty table land. The land stretching back from Nebo is still called Sufa, the field of Zophim.† We followed an easy undulating track of slightly grassed country, and passing many 'Adwan camps, came out on the big rolling plateau of the

* Speaker's Comy. Note on Numbers xxii., 5. "Balaam, the Son of Beor." † Numbers xxiii., 14.

upper plains of Moab; the summits of the higher waves of ground are covered with ruins, and full of caves, underground reservoirs, and cisterns. At the ruins of a village called by Sheik Ali, Garb El Kefeir, stands a large circular stone like an enormous mill stone, standing on its edge and half buried in the soil.

Conder notices these disc stones; and mentions one close in this neighbourhood at Kufeir Abu Bedd, a ruined site North of Nebo. Had this not been so I should have thought the one we saw at the Garb-el-Kefeir, East of Nebo, was the one he describes. He thinks they may be the Hammanim or "sun images," which were destroyed by Josiah.* While the name of Diblathaim or "Two Discs" applying to a town in Moab, as well as Diblater† may be thought to have some connection with these disc stones.‡ Then past the caves and ruins of another village, and Madeba—the ancient Medeba of the Bible—came in view; it stands on the summit of a lofty mound, and from its having some modern buildings on its summit, as well as from the fact that it is inhabited, presents an imposing appearance. All round, as far as the eye could reach, the land was waving with golden

* II. Chron. xxxiv., 4. † Ezek vi., 14.
‡ "Heth and Moab," p. 262.

DISC STONE, GARB EL KEFEIR.

barley and green wheat, broken here and there by the deep crimson madder of the upturned soil laying fallow for next year's sowing.

The ancient rich inheritance of Reuben, "all the plain by Medeba."* When the Israelites under Moses first came to this country, all the plain country from Aroer on the edge of the precipice of the river Arnon as far North as Mount Gilead seems to have been held, and had been at no distant date conquered by Sihon, king of the Amorites, from a "former king of Moab."

* Josh. xiii., 16.

CHAPTER II.

Medeba—Hameideh Escort—Baal-meon—Bedouin Doctoring—Wady Zerka Main—Jebel Attarus—Attaroth—Machaerus—Kiriathaim—Wady Waleh—Dibon.

We camped on the North-Western side of the town, which we find is inhabited entirely by Christians of the Latin and Greek Orthodox Churches. The Sheiks of the Greek church called on us, and on our making enquiries as to antiquities, informed us that the town had been but recently inhabited by Christians from Kerak; that in digging to find stones for building they had found columns, capitals, and some mosaic pavement, and offered to take us to see them, which we gladly accepted. In the meanwhile our 'Adwan guard informed us that they could take us no farther South, the country towards Kerak belonging to the tribe of the Hameideh. So a messenger was sent to summon their Sheiks. Accompanied by Sheik Ali we rode out to the ruins of a large village above two miles away, called Sheik el Kefeir. Here their are ruins of

larger buildings. Prostrate columns and a few debased capitals lay about; one column yet stands erect, many caves and underground grain storehouses and water cisterns, the latter shewing signs of having been carefully cemented to make them watertight. Some of the buildings now underground (but I think made so by the accumulation of *debris)* have been carefully arched over with stone, but all now is desolation; a fox bolted from before us in one ruin, to take refuge in another.

In the number of caves and caverns, not dotted over the country, but grouped together on rising ground, we think we see the dwellings of the Horites—the Troglodytes—the dwellers in caves, who were dispossessed by the Moabites and Amorites, who built their towns and villages over the caves and used these underground chambers for storehouses and stables; then came the Israelites who destroyed and rebuilt, but the caves would remain, some perhaps covered in and lost, others re-opened and re-used as granaries and stables; lastly came the carrying away of Israel by Sargon, King of Assyria.*

* The commencement of the siege of Samaria was undertaken by Shalamanezer, II, Kings xv., 13, but the city was captured in the reign of Sargon, according to his inscription.

The country was then re-occupied by Moab. Chapters 15 and 16 of Isaiah, written as they must be after that re-occupation by the Moabites, foretell the Moabite downfall: "Moab shall howl over Nebo, and over Medeba;" and Jeremiah, also prophesying afterwards, uses a simile that strikes us much after seeing these numberless caves and reservoirs and cisterns, all inhabited by pigeons: "O ye that dwell in Moab, leave the cities and dwell in the rock, and be like the dove that maketh her nest in the sides of the hole's mouth."* Cornelius Palma, the Emperor Trajan's general, annexed the great province of Arabia from the Nabatheans, who held all this country as far as Damascus under their kings, who seem all to have been designated by the name or title of Aretas.† Bosra, Gerasa (Jerash), and Philadelphia (Rabbath of Ammon), and Petra became Roman cities.‡ Roads were constructed and mile stones were put up; temples, theatres, and vast public buildings were erected, reservoirs and water storage seen to, and the plundering Bedouins suppressed by the disciplined legionaries. Thus under the Roman Empire prosperity re-commenced. Christianity

* Jer. xlviii., 28.

† Josephus Ant., 13, 15, 2. II. Corinthians xi., 32.

‡ Ammian Marcell, 14—8

spread widely over the country. Then the whole country, East of Jordan from Batanieh to Aroer, must have been rich, and covered with fine towns and public buildings, churches, and towers. Huge public works had been completed in making the extensive system of large open reservoirs of water, storing the winter rains that ran down the wadys and the land must have been a garden. Then came the invasion of Chosroes II., followed by that of the Mohammedans, which, like a monster blight, destroyed all it found, till now more than two-thirds of the land is desert waste and the other third totally inadequately cultivated; whilst piles of stones and the old names—still clung to by the tenacious conservatism of the Eastern—alone indicate the great cities of Heshbon, Dibon, Attarus, and Aroer, and till recently, Medeba.

On returning from Sheik el Kefeir, we went into Medeba and met the Sheik who kindly shewed us where the inhabitants had been excavating for stone for their new houses on the northern side of the town. About three feet below the surface there appears to be any quantity of foundations, and the lower floors of buildings of the Roman time What looks like the foundation of one of the town gateways lies to the North, and near here is a little Greek church built on old

foundations, and having an ancient pavement of stone mosaic, the principal colours of which are red, yellow, a blackish blue, and white. The pavement was very good. The Sheik told me they had found much mosaic pavement here, and then shewed me some Corinthian capitals, some mouldings, etc.; but they simply use these old buildings as a quarry, and four men were at work breaking up and squaring the fine old-faced stones into convenient little squares to build their new houses. Riding on to the N.E., the Sheik shewed us more foundations, which he said had belonged to a gate in the old town wall, and then took us to a house built of stone arches covered with stone rafters, with a beautiful mosaic floor in almost perfect preservation. The women of the house wetted the floor and wiped it to shew it well. It is a really beautiful piece of work, and more perfect than we have seen anywhere; the colours are quite bright, and the geometrical pattern of simple leaves is much like the one at the Greek Church before mentioned. In the centre of the room is a circle of double ribbons contained in two squares enclosing an inscription in Greek.* An inscription in the same character

* "In gazing upon the Virgin Mary, Mother of God, and upon Him whom She brought forth, Christ the Sovereign King, only Son of the only God, be thou pure in mind, and flesh, and deeds, in order that thou mayest, by thy pure prayers, find God Himself merciful."

Quarterly Statement Palestine Exploration Fund, July, 1895. p. 209.

is in one corner of the room under an arch. My son tried to copy this last but only managed a portion, the rest having been built over ;* and so to camp, to watch the flocks and herds, and camels of the people of Medeba streaming home to be safely housed for the night. Next day the Sheiks of the Hameideh arrived, and long and earnest bargainings and negociations followed. Sheik Ali, whose twelve-foot long spear stands stuck in front of our tents—and under whose protection we remained until a bargain was struck with the Hameideh—played a great hand. He demanded a present from the Hameideh for having brought us to them. Finally Najm came and asked me to see the Bedouin Sheiks and explain to them where we wanted to go. So in they trooped into our tent, and after gravely shaking hands I told them I wished to see as many of the old ruins as possible, and to go *viâ* Main, Attarus, M'Kaur, Kurieyut, Wady Waleh, etc., etc. They then retired, and after more talk, noise, gesticulation,

* "The very beautiful mosaic work of this sanctuary, and of the holy house of the altogether pure Sovereign Mother of God (has been made) by the care and the zeal of this town of Medeba for the salvation and the reward of the well-doers dead and (living) of this sanctuary, Amen, Lord. It was accomplished by the aid of God, in the month of February, in the year 674, indiction 5."

This Seleucidan year would correspond to 362 A.D. Quarterly Statement Palestine Exploration Fund, July, 1895. p. 209.

whispered asides, and conferences than one could imagine to be got out of the subject, a price was settled, and they agreed to safely conduct us to where we wanted to go in their country, and back to Medeba where we were to be met again by the 'Adwan. So we started, and making a short ride arrived at a Hameideh camp, where we were ceremoniously treated to a quarter of a cup of the usual bitter coffee, and thence winding on through a net work of shallow wadys, emerged under the Hill of Main, the Baal Meon of the Bible. Riding to the summit of the hill we found the same caves and the same heaps of stones, only here we found some carved crosses, some broken columns, etc. The view from the summit is very fine. Our camp was pitched at the foot of the hill near some old wells, or rather old reservoirs, that still hold water.

Baal Meon was included in the towns given to Reuben, Dibon, and Bamoth-baal, and Beth-baal-meon.* Ezekiel, who prophesied Circa B.C. 579, mentions Baal-meon amongst the cities of Moab on which judgment will be executed, shewing it had been re-occupied by Moab after the Israelites' captivity.† Here we rested Sunday.

*Jos. xiii., 17. † Ezek. xxv., 9. "Therefore, behold, I will open the shoulder of Moab from the cities, from his cities which are on his frontiers, the glory of the country Beth-Jeshimoth, Baal-meon, and Kiriathaim."

The barley harvest was in full swing, the reapers joining in a monotonous chant at intervals to encourage each other to work hard as they cut the little handfuls of corn, leaving about eight inches of straw below the ear.

In the afternoon a Hameideh Arab came to me to be doctored for continual pain in the stomach. I said I was not a Hakkim, but would try to help him. I found that according to Arab custom he had burnt himself severely with a red hot iron over the seat of the pain. I advised him to discontinue the hot iron treatment, and, as the Bedouins all eat very fast, directed him to eat very slow and wait between the mouthfuls, and gave him some antibilious pills. He took them, and departed without a word. Next day, however, he came back and thanked me, saying he was much better. Then a Christian from Kerak was brought to me to see. He took off his head-dress and showed me three frightful looking wounds in his head, all healed up. One on the top of the head from a sabre that must have cut deep into the skull, an awful looking long scar on his left breast, another on his right arm, and a spear stab on his back close to the spine. All these wounds he said he had got fighting with the Bedouins.

How he could have survived such injuries seemed marvellous. However, he appeared very proud of them. Then another Bedouin came to me to have his knee doctored. He also had treated his knee to the fiery process. I told him a knee was beyond my powers: that I possessed a sick knee of my own and couldn't cure it.

Monday we started riding in a South-Westerly direction. At first we wound through a network of shallow wadys, in one of which we were stopped at a Bedouin camp, and made to dismount, and were presented with the usual coffee in one of the low black tents. Here a small Bedouin child screamed with terror at our pale faces, and would not be comforted. Then we crossed some deeper valleys, and finally began to ascend the slopes of Jebel Attarus. We passed the head of the wady Zerka Main, at the bottom of which are the hot springs of Callirrhoe, where Herod went as a last resort in his illness. The view was magnificent as we looked deep down into this magnificent gorge. It has been suggested that this may be the valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor, where it is said the Lord buried Moses: "But no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day." From here we ascended Jebel Attarus, finding some terebinth trees at the

summit, and a large cairn of loose stones. There are some wells here holding rain water just below the cairn. Thence we descended still in a South-Westerly direction for the town of Attarus, which is only a mass of stones and ruins. This is the site of the ancient Ataroth, one of the towns asked for by the Reubenites and Gadites, the land being suitable for their cattle, and granted to them on condition that the fighting men should go on with the rest of Israel "over Jordan before the Lord, until He hath driven out His enemies from before Him."* The Gadites then re-built Ataroth and Atroth (possibly the site of the latter is marked by the heaps of stones on the summit of Jebel Attarus. It seems probable there was a town here from the existence of the wells I mentioned). King Mesha, in his account of his partly successful rebellion against Israel, in Jehoram, the son of Ahab's reign, writes: "The men of Gad dwelt in the country of Ataroth from ancient times." (M. Clairmont Ganneau, translation of the Moabite stone.)

After a rise, curving to the Eastwards, to make a detour round the head of a deep wady, we turned due west, and in about an hour and a half reached the ruins of M'Kaur, the old Machaerus

* Numbers xxxii, 21.

below which was a small camp of Bedouins, who immediately they caught sight of our cavalcade galloped to warn their shepherds, the women and children running to the tents and disappearing. They were evidently in a great state of trepidation, and certainly thought we had come for no good object. An extensive piece of ground, covered with ruins, mark the old town. The remains of the fortress stand on a small hill, separated from the town by a valley, little but foundations and some underground buildings.

Josephus relates that Alexander Janneus was the first who built a citadel here about B.C. 94. This was afterwards demolished by the Roman Pro-Consul A. Gabinius, when he made war against Aristobulus, younger brother of Hyrcanus, B.C. 57, but when Herod the Great was king he rebuilt it, "as it was near the Arabian frontier, and surrounded a large space of ground with walls and towers, and built a city there, out of which city was a way up to the citadel, on the top of the mountain, which he surrounded with a wall with towers at the corners, of an hundred and fifty cubits high, in the middle of which he built a beautiful palace, and made many reservoirs that there might be no lack of water, and stored it with engines of war." Lucilius Bassus, the Roman

Legate, captured it from the Jews after the taking of Jerusalem by Titus. Here Josephus also distinctly states that John the Baptist was beheaded, and that the murder created so much consternation among the Jews that they considered Herod Antipas' subsequent defeat by Aretas, King of the Nabatheans, as being a judgment for John's murder, "For all men counted John as a Prophet." Aretas had declared war against Herod because he had put away Aretas' daughter to marry Herodias, his brother Philip's wife,* and John had boldly said "it is not lawful for thee to have her," which had excited Herodias' utmost anger and spirit of revenge. Surely Josephus, writing at comparatively so short a time after the event, should be more likely to be correct than modern theories, that Samaria, then called Sebaste, was the scene of the tragedy. The sacred account does not even say that Herod was keeping his birthday at the same place where John was imprisoned; simply "he *sent*, and beheaded John in the prison, and his head was brought in a charger and given to the damsel, and the damsel gave it to her mother." No great journey to accomplish from Sebaste, even if Herod was holding court there, to Machaerus and back in

* Josephus Ant: Book xviii., Chapter v.

those days, for a messenger of death sent by an absolute tyrant. St. John the Baptist was not allowed to see again the magnificent view and lovely colouring of the hills and Dead Sea, as we saw it from the fortress of Machaerus, but he was murdered in the dungeon. Herod seems himself to have been frightened of his work, for did he not afterwards say of our Lord, "This is John the Baptist: He is risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do show forth themselves in Him." Whilst thinking over these things, up came four truculent wild-looking Bedouins from the camp near, armed to the teeth, who at once began to ask our guard why they had brought us there without their leave, to which Hamdan answered that as Sheik, he asked no leave of the Hameideh to take us where he chose in his own country. Words ran high, but we were the more numerous and best armed party, and so we left with nothing more than words.

Retracing our steps for some two or three miles we turned to the S.E., and passing some wells, Beer-el Moughov, with large flocks of goats and sheep near them, climbed to the top of the two hills on which the ruins of Kurieyut stand, and found many Hamiedeh camped there, and at the foot of the hill found our own camp pitched, our men

BEDOUINS, MACHAERUS.

having come the short journey direct from Main. Kurieyut is probably the ancient Kiriathaim, or Kirjathaim. Here "Amraphel King of Shinar, Arioch King of Ellaser, Chedorlaomer King of Elam and Tidal King of Nations," (or Eri-Aku, King of Larsa, Tud-khula son of Gazza, and Kudur-laga-mal King of Elam, whose names Mr. Pinches found associated together on a broken cuneiform tablet), "smote the Emins (the aboriginal race of great stature, whom the Moabites subsequently turned out) in Shaveh (or the plains of) Kiriathaim. Afterwards with Ataroth, Kiriathaim belonged to the tribe of Gad. The ruins consist principally of buildings of a much later date, constructed on the same principle as the smaller buildings in Bashan. Stone rafters, supported on stone arches, formed the upper floors and roofs. That evening there was much talk amongst our Bedouins of some stone with writing on it, possessed by a Bedouin of this place, and much haggling went on as to what I was to pay to see it. Visions of prospective Moabite stones floated in our minds, and next day we were told that on payment of a certain sum I should see and copy the stone. I offered half, and finally this was agreed to. Then more Bedouins came up, and said unless they were paid too, I should not see

the stone. So, telling Najm that he must drive the best bargain he could, we mounted, and, wishing them good-bye, rode slowly off. The idea of losing all was too much for them, and we were desired to return by loud calls that they would shew the stone and let it be copied as agreed. So back we came, and were taken to the mouth of an old reservoir, closed with stones, some of which being removed, three men disappeared into the hollow. Many Bedouins had now collected, and there was much excitement. Some delay occurred as the original hider, who was represented in his absence by a most vociferously shrill, excitable, and dirty old Bedouin lady, had so carefully concealed the stone that it could not be easily found. Finally, with the help of a rope, the stone was extracted and brought to me, and I was at once surrounded by an anxious crowd. One glance, and my visions faded, it was an Arabic inscription—Najm said a portion of the Koran. However, as I had paid to copy it, I got the squeeze paper out and, wetting it, began to apply the brush. Then a row began: I was going to take the writing off, said one; I was going to steal the inscription, said another; I was robbing them, I was robbing them, they screamed together. At last the noise and the pushing got insupportable. In front, the Bedouin

who had been paid, with the money in his hand, was gesticulating wildly; Sheik Hamdun snatched it from him, returned it quickly to Najm, and tearing off the squeeze paper, threw it in their faces, shouting they should not cheat me. A dash was made at Najm to get back the money, but our Bedouin escort closed in, and as we mounted the noise was deafening. Sheik Hamdun, with his keffiyeh half off, pulled one man, while another pulled him; another gentleman, with a fluent flow of language, and few clothes, was held back from doing someone else a serious injury by two other men who held him by his arms; the Bedouin women raised shrill cries, and more people started to run down the hill. With a glance at me, Sheik Hamdun shook clear, mounted, and we moved off close together. We had not gone a hundred yards before they began calling to us to come back. "Give them the money, and we could copy as we liked; Come back! Come back!" Sheik Hamdun and our escort rose to the occasion; they burst out into a torrent of invective, under cover of which we took our last glimpse of the gentle inhabitants of Kurieyut. A detour round a hill brought us to the edge of the Wady Waleh, with deep precipitous sides; far down below us, the faint pink line of oleanders marked the course of the stream of

water. The track downwards wound in and out of the precipices, and was so bad at times as to force us all to dismount. It seems to be considered quite a point of honour amongst the Bedouins never to dismount as long as it is possible to ride. Half way down two ibex bounded away scared by the rattle of stones, displaced by our descending party. An hour's steady descent brought us to the bottom, and forcing our way through the oleanders we came to the clear quickly-running stream of the Wady Waleh. Here we halted under the shade for luncheon, and my son and I walked a slight distance up stream to enjoy the delights of a bathe in running water. The stream teemed with fish, who, directly we lay quiet in the water, surrounded us on every side, darting away at any motion we made. We were re-dressing leisurely on the bank when through the oleanders pushed a herd of black goats, followed by a nearly naked wild-looking Hameideh herdsman, who was startled nearly out of his senses by suddenly coming on two Englishmen dressing. However, one of our escort immediately came up, and matters were explained. But I have seldom seen a man look more badly scared; his eyes, as he clutched his knob stick, fairly started out of his head. After luncheon a steep climb of

an hour and a half brought us to the level of the opposite plateau. We found some ruins on our right, and then rode straight South-East for Dibon, which we reached in a couple of hours. Dibon, or Diban as it is now called, is a mass of shapeless ruins on the summit of two hills. There are remains of large reservoirs, now useless and dry, in the valleys to the North-West of the town. To the Westward and Northward the ascent to the town is very steep. A strong wall has surrounded the city; but of the buildings one could make but little, though we rode most carefully round the ruins and clambered amongst them for some time. What remains we saw seemed to indicate that the dwelling houses had been built of arches, that supported long rafters of stone. We found the part of a stone door constructed in same fashion as the better-made doors in the mountain of Bashan. Water here was very scarce, but our guard had pitched our camp near a cistern, with whose Bedouin owner our men had a long haggle as to the price to be paid for the water. All this tract of country that we passed through to-day is being eaten up by locusts. The Bedouins say that when there is a plague of locusts there is always cholera amongst the pilgrims returning from Mecca. The Haj is due in about four week's time.

I enquired whether the locusts usually came when there was a scarcity of water, and they said that was so. So I imagine that the real cause of the cholera is the lowness, and consequently the increased impurity of the water in the cisterns that are never cleaned out. Flocks and herds collect round their well-like openings to be watered, and the next rain that comes all the manure and filth is naturally carried into the cistern. They are all ancient, and have been carefully cemented round inside. In those instances where the cement has cracked or broken off, the cistern leaks and is useless. Dibon seems to be especially badly off for water. As Jeremiah prophecied, the daughter that did inhabit Dibon, has indeed "come down from her glory and sits in thirst." King Baldwin 1st, Circa A.D., 1100, founded a stronghold that he named Montreal, on the ancient site of Diban in Moab.

CHAPTER III.

Aroer—The River Arnon—The Road of Arnon—Umm Rasas—Amouskera—Macadeben Nasr Allah—Karyet Felha—Wady Waleh—Pariah Dogs—Performing Goat—Medeba—Ostrich Eggs—Nettil—Ancient Khan at Umm Welid—Umm Uxier—Ant-lion.

Ordering our camp to go to the upper waters of the Wady Waleh, we, with two of the Hameideh, rode South for Aroer, which we reached in about an hour and a half, the old town and fortress, now little more than heaps of stones, stands on the very edge of the precipice that forms the side of the valley of the river Arnon, which like the Wady Waleh has been cut deep down by the action of the water. Here, as elsewhere, on this side of Jordan, the Arnon is fringed with oleanders now covered with blossom. The track down to the river and ascending on the Southern sides zigzags backwards and forwards, and seems only fit for goats to use. The old fortress stands at the top of this track. Looking Westwards along the valley

of the Arnon (here about two miles across from the top of one precipice to the summit of the other), the pink fringe of oleander winds amongst the red and amber coloured rocks to the far-off deep blue of the Dead Sea. To the Eastwards, the river divides into three sources, each descending its own valley. "The brooks of Arnon," "The stream of the brooks that goeth down to the dwelling of Ar, and lieth upon the border of Moab."* Aroer was rebuilt by the Gadites. But King Mesha writes Circa 872 B.C., on the Moabite stone, "It is I who have built Aroer and made the road of Arnon," the precipitous track I have mentioned, but doubtless kept in a better condition then, the boast of having made the road of Arnon, shews the difficulties that had to be surmounted, for whilst Mesha claims to have built (rebuilt ?) nearly all the cities of Moab, constructed fortresses, ordered his people to dig wells, and made cisterns himself, the road of Arnon is the only road mentioned. Striking out in a North-Easterly direction from Aroer, we cantered over an undulating plain country, sparsely covered with thin grass and desert bushes, a fox surprised in his mid-day nap, broke away and ran to ground a short distance away. After about three hours ride we saw the walls of our destination, Umm

* Numbers xxi, 14, 15.

Rasas appear on the horizon. Our escort kept a sharp look out, for we were now near the boundary of the Hameideh, and the relations between them and their neighbours, the Beni Sahr, were apparently strained about the usual matter; the Beni Sahr having appropriated certain camels belonging to the Hameideh. Presently, a string of camels appear in the distance, but our Bedouins said they were laden, therefore not a marauding party. We now came to the remains of a very large system of reservoirs, made to catch the surface water from the numerous little valleys, the overflow from one reservoir filling those below it, but all entirely broken down and useless. Another quarter of an hour brought us to the walls of Umm Rasas (the Mother of Lead). The town enclosed by walls, is an oblong of about 600 by 400 yards, the shorter side laying to the East and West. There is an arched gateway on the Eastern side, and a gate on the Northern. There has been a considerable suburb outside the walls on the Northern side, which has had several large buildings; the arches supporting the upper floors or roofs are in some places still standing. Here a big cistern or underground reservoir for water has partly fallen in, showing the openings of the subterranean stone drains that led the water into it. At a distance of 200 yards to the East of the town is a small hill or mound, that

has been hollowed and opened out semi-circularly to the Southward, forming apparently an Amphitheatre, but we could find no stone work visible. Excavation could alone make its original purpose certain. To the Southward of this Theatre, is a very large tank cut out of the solid rock and built up with masonry towards the top; steps run into it at its South-West angle. Openings of stone drains that conducted water into it are visible; it is about 50 feet deep and 150 feet long, but not quite so broad; there was no trace of its having recently held water. The town itself has towers in the wall at its four angles. To the East and West the wall is strengthened by four smaller towers or buttresses. On the North and South by five. Inside the town at the Eastern side, and built against the wall, are the semi-circular ends of a building that appears to have been a temple; otherwise the town, with the exception of arches that have withstood the overthrow is a mass of ruins, the masonry has been strong and the stones large, no cement or mortar has been used. We found a cross carved on a fallen lintel; the line of a street running East and West near the Southern side is easily distinguished. At about half to three-quarters of a mile to the Northward is another system of reservoirs and tanks with the remains of a building that appears to have been a bath. 500 yards to the North-West stands a tall, well-built, graceful, square tower, with

TOWER, UMM RASAS.

a cross enclosed in a circle carved on each of its four sides; the patterns of the crosses vary, some being of the shape known as St. Andrew's and some St. George's. There has been a way leading up the tower, but the entrance is choked with rubbish, and some of the steps have fallen and filled up the staircase. The top of the tower has been open and decorated with semi-columns at the four sides; near the tower is a large building that has apparently been a Christian Church. A cross is carved over a window. There has been an inscription in Greek over the door, but it is quite illegible, and is scratched all over, as indeed all the ruins are, with Bedouin tribal marks. Close to the Church, and excavated out of the rock, is another series of reservoirs, connected with each other by subterranean ducts. I questioned our Bedouins as to what they knew about the town, but could get no information, nor any reason for its curious name, "The Mother of Lead"—they could only tell me that their fathers had always called it so. They said the Hameideh tribe had not originally held this district, but they had captured it from the Jellawin tribe. It seems strange that a walled town with such considerable buildings should have entirely slipped into oblivion. Najm's horse fell with him whilst crossing some ruins, getting a

forefoot fast between two stones; he luckily got off with some bruises. From here we struck off North-West for the upper fords of Wady Waleh, we cantered and walked alternately over the rolling plains, passing about a mile from Umm Rasas another large series of broken reservoirs and dams, and in about three hours arrived at a camp of Hameideh near some ruins on a mound, called by the Bedouins "Amoushkera." It is simply a huge mass of squared stones tumbled in inextricable confusion on each other. The valleys now became more marked, and winding down one of them we came again to large broken dams that once stored the water that must run down this valley in the rainy season, and not far from it the ruins of Macadeben Nasr Allah—heaps of stones like Amoushkera. Riding through a perfect network of small valleys, we arrived at another shapeless mass of ruins called Karyet Felha, here the ground commenced to be again cultivated in patches, and we saw a good many partridges. On over the plain we cantered, and then got into a valley descending rapidly to the Wady Waleh, at the bottom of which we found our camp on a level piece of ground near the water, with its fringe of oleanders, whose blossoms our servants had gathered to decorate our tents with. We were sitting outside our tents, waiting for dinner,

when three horsemen rode up who turned out to be Circassians, the governor of Amman and two soldiers on their way to Kerak, where there is trouble and fighting. We asked him to dinner, which he gratefully accepted, and he and his men camped near us that night, starting on their way before daylight. The night in this valley was very hot and oppressive; mosquitoes disturbed the little sleep we could snatch, so we were glad to be in the saddle at daylight ascending the Northern bank of the valley. From here we rode back to Madeba, and camped in the same place as before. The manners of the Pariah dogs are very amusing to watch. I noticed a young dog had set something of no earthly importance under a rock, probably a lizard. The turn of his neck, his rapt attention, and the doubly-waved line of his gently wagging tail, attracted the prompt attention of a big old dog, who said as plain as a dog could speak, "Hullo, what's he got? I'll just see," and down he came to enquire. The young dog not having seen the presumed lizard for some time, had by this time tired of setting, and seeing the old big dog coming, danced light-heartedly out and whisked round and round him barking, which frivolous conduct was rebuked by a snarling growl from his senior, whose bristles went up like a bottle brush. Arrived at the stone the elder

enquired with his nose what was the object of attraction, and finding that the whole thing was drivelling folly, and that it was a case of "has been a lizard," felt that his dignity was likely to be impaired by having evinced curiosity as to anything a fool of a young dog *could* smell; so drawing himself up so stiff that he stood on his tip-toes, he growled and scratched up the sand with his hind feet right into the young dog's face, who was cavorting idiotically near, and then stalked off slowly with increased dignity: very much like some old gentleman, who having advanced a statement that he cannot see his way to defend, gives a pompous cough in order that by inspiring reverence, argument may not be brought against him, and his dignity in consequence may suffer no loss. One of the Sheiks at Medeba offered me an ostrich's egg. We saw a good many in the town, and smelt one that had just been blown. The one presented to me was said to be a fresh one, but we did not venture to try it: the reminiscence of the one that had been emptied was too freshly (that word is hardly descriptive) with us. Seeing these eggs made me enquire where they were found, and we were told they had been picked up some little distance East of Medeba, and that the birds were occasionally seen. Three men with a performing bear, monkey, and goat came to our

PERFORMING GOAT, BEAR AND MONKEY.

tents and amused us; the goat was very clever, mounting on short pieces of stick put one above the other, and arranging its feet and balance so cleverly as each fresh piece was added. We here discharged our Hameideh escort and paid them. After thanking us, and getting a small additional present, they set to work to quarrel frantically among themselves as to the division of the money. A messenger was sent off to obtain an escort from our old friends the 'Adwan, whose territory we were now going to re-enter. Finding that neither 'Adwan nor Hameideh would escort us for a day's ride East of Medeba, we secured the services of a Christian, who knew the country, and of a Zaptieh, and early in the morning we cantered off East-South-East across the desert from Medeba. The cultivated ground soon ceased, and we crossed undulating plains of scanty grass. Three hours ride brought us to the ruins of Nettil. This has been a town of some importance, the remains of the wall that surrounded it are visible in several places: there are the wrecks of old reservoirs in its vicinity, and several wells. The buildings have been entirely built of stone, the floors and roofs resting on lines of parallel arches. We found numerous crosses, inside circles, carved on the lintels of the doors; many of the lower rooms still remain intact. The ruins are scratched all over

with Bedouin tribal marks. From here we rode East for an hour and a half, and arrived at Umm Welid (the Mother of the Children). The ruins of this town are on the summit of a small hill, and are of the same description as Nettil; but to the South-West of the hill is a square-walled, strongly-built enclosure with rooms round the four walls on the inside; the court in the centre being left open. The gateway into this building is in the middle of the Southern side. The building is 40 yards square outside measurement; the rooms, some of which open from one into the other, and others direct into the central yard, are 24 feet broad. The outer walls 5 feet thick. On the South there are three rooms on either side of the gateway; on the East and West sides there are five rooms, not counting the corner ones; on the North side, eight rooms down its entire length. The Christian from Medeba told me it was a palace; I think, however, that there cannot be much doubt that it was built for a Khan, and constructed with stones from the older ruins near it, especially as on the Eastern wall we found a drafted stone, corresponding with similar stones we saw in the town on the hill; a solitary drafted stone would not, I think, have been used in a wall, had not the stone have come ready cut from elsewhere. The ruins on the hill are of the same character, built on stone arches, but of greater extent than

those of Nettil. From hence a North-North-West course brought us in about an hour to the ruins of Umm Uxier. This also stands on a mound. It resembles generally the towns of Nettil and Umm Welid. On the highest ground is a solidly-built square tower, measuring about 40 feet square, it had apparently no entrance from the level of the ground, but must have been entered from a door on the upper floor approached by a ladder; there are no traces of an outer staircase. It has evidently been designed for defence, and such a building, when the ladder had been drawn up, would obviously afford great security to its defenders. Having climbed to the top of the tower, we found that there had been a way inside down to chambers on the ground floor. We had left our rifles at the foot of the tower, whilst we ascended, and while we were still at the top, had the mortification of seeing a herd of Gazelles appear out of a dip in the ground not far from the tower, and catching our wind, go off at a gallop. My son and I scrambled down, and getting our horses, made a wide detour in hopes of getting a shot, but did not see them again; it was a forlorn hope, as having once thoroughly got our wind, they were not likely to stop again soon. Here we rested for luncheon, and whilst we were eating it, and well hid, possibly luckily, by the ruins, we saw a large party of Beni

Sahr on camels pass Southwards about five miles from us. When they had disappeared, remo unting, we road back West for Medeba, passing on our way a site covered with heaps of stones marking another town, called El Howareh. On our return to camp, we found our 'Adwan escort had arrived, and so arranged to start the following morning.

We watched an ant-lion, who had made his conical pit near the door of our dining tent. He lay at the bottom concealed under the sand with only his formidable mandibles shewing. An ant in a great hurry, they always seem to have no spare moments, passed that way; he would go straight across the pit, instead of taking two seconds longer to go round, the sand slipped and down he went to the bottom, to be immediately seized by those cruel mandibles, and battered to death by rapid strong blows against the sand, and then dragged below the surface to be devoured at leisure. In its perfect stage this insect developes into a beautiful sort of Moth, not unlike a Dragon-fly.

CHAPTER IV.

Heshbon—Elealeh—The Fish Pools of Heshbon—Bedouin Shepherds—Forest Country—Arak el Emir, the Prince's Cliff and the Palace of Hyrcanus—The Sons of Tobiah—Wady es Sir—Columbarium cut in live rock.

I ordered the camp to go to the Ain Hesban, the Springs of Hesban, probably mentioned in Solomon's Song as the Fishpools of Heshbon, and I wished to make a detour Eastwards to see if we could find any more ruins, and my son was keen to get a shot at a gazelle; but the 'Adwan would not go with us so far to the East, they said it was out of their country, and in a word it was evident that they were afraid of the Beni Sahr, so we had to give this up and rode direct for Heshbon.

We rode in a Northerly direction across waving plains till we came to the Ruins of Heshbon, which are on the summits of two low hills. The town appears to have been of some extent; originally it belonged to the Moabites, from whom it was captured by the Amorite king, Sihon, who in his

turn was dispossessed by the Children of Israel under Moses. The fact that it belonged to Moab is preserved in that curious old ode, "Come into Heshbon, let the city of Sihon be built and prepared, for there is a fire gone out of Heshbon, a flame from the city of Sihon; it hath consumed Ar of Moab, and the lords of the high places of Arnon. Woe to thee Moab, thou art undone O people of Chemosh; he hath given his sons that escaped and his daughters into captivity unto Sihon, King of the Amorites." Then bursts in the Hebrew triumphant verse, "we have shot at them, Heshbon is perished even unto Dibon, and we have laid them waste even unto Nophah, which reacheth (or, with fire) unto Medeba."* This ancient song is quoted by Jeremiah,† and it clearly shows that the claim of the Ammonites in Jephtha's time that Israel had taken away from them all the land between Arnon and Jabbock was incorrect.‡ The absolute ruin and desolation of the country is marvellously foretold by Jeremiah. Dibon, now the waterless, then supplied with an abundance of reservoirs and wells, is to come down from her glory and sit in thirst. Aroer, by the way of the going down to Arnon, is to "stand by the way

* Numbers xxi., 27, 17, &c. † Jeremiah xlviii., 45, 46.
‡ Judges xi., 13.

and espy.....and say what is done;" "and I have caused wine to fail from the wine presses, none shall tread with shouting, their shouting shall be no shouting. From the city of Heshbon even unto Elealeh,"* the ruins of which, now called El Al, we passed on, leaving Heshbon about a mile to the North. Then turning down a wady, we descended to Ain Hesban, the Fishpools of Heshbon mentioned in Solomon's song, where he likens the prince's daughter's eyes to the "Fish-pools in Heshbon, by the gate of Beth-rabbim."† There are no pools there now, but the springs are abundant and the cool clear water makes it the favourite watering place of the Bedouin sheep and goat herds. In constant succession all day long they passed our camp leading their flocks to water. It looked as if the separate flocks would mix in hopeless confusion, but no, like two packs of hounds who run together in a hunt, at the conclusion of the chase divide to the call of their own huntsmen, so the individuals of the flock walked quietly off after watering to the calls of their own shepherds leading them to the pastures.

Najm contrived a most excellent bathing place for us by erecting a small tent over a deepish pool some little distance below the springs, where we

* Jeremiah 48. † Solomon's Song vii., 4.

had the most delightful cool plunges greatly to the dismay of the Terrepin turtles and frogs. Ain Hesban, while we were there, was suffering from a plague of earwigs, they over-ran everything in our tents in hundreds, and were most objectionable. Here we rested all Sunday, and early next morning we started up the valley, and turning to the left took a Northerly direction. The country now suddenly altered, instead of the bare rocks we came to a well-wooded tract of mountainous country covered thickly with evergreen oaks, some of which were fine trees with big gnarled trunks; it was perfectly delicious riding in the shade they afforded. Crossing the head waters of the Wady Naaur, we turned more Westerly, and crossed Wady el Bahhath, where we surprised a party of Bedouin children playing in the oleander scrub bordering its banks; some ran away, but one little fellow who was sitting on a rock in the middle of the brook, finding escape impossible, sat immovable with terror, staring at our white faces; the rapidly running water, the thick background of oleander bushes covered with blossoms, and the bronze statue-like figure of the child on the rock in the foreground, making one of the prettiest pictures imaginable. We wound up the hill through a Bedouin camp with no one but women and children at home, and finally arrived at Wady

PALACE OF HYRCANUS.

es Sir and saw the cliff of Arak el Emir and the palace of Hyrcanus immediately in front of us. We first rode to the palace, built by Hyrcanus about 180 B.C. It is almost surrounded by a moat, which has been filled with water led from a higher level of the Wady es Sir; two large animals, perhaps lions, are carved above the cornice at both ends of the Eastern wall; some of the stones are very large, but, though long and high, are not so broad as is mostly the case in ancient stone work. One measures 20ft. by 10ft. by 2ft. 2in. Remnants of columns lay about; the capitals are partly Ionic and partly Egyptian. There is a steepish narrow path leading from the Eastern gate up to a large artificially-raised plateau under the Prince's cliff. This path has upright stones in pairs, one on each side of it, at intervals of about twenty yards, four feet from each other; they have holes bored through them near the top, which holes are larger on the higher or Northern side than on the Southern or lower (Conder, in "Heth and Moab" thinks that the presence of a very large stone laying near one pair indicates that these stones were used to pass ropes through to haul large stones to the palace). To my mind they looked as if they formed the uprights of a balustrade or guard rail to the path—the distance is long, but it occurred to us that the rail need not have had only these stone

uprights, there may have been wooden uprights, one or even two pairs between every two pairs of stone ones. If the holes had been cut in these curious stones to reeve ropes through, surely they would have been cut of the same size throughout, and bevelled off at the edges—but this is not so. On arriving at the top of the plateau, we found it triangular in shape, with remains of a wall on the Eastern and Southern sides, and some ruins at the South-East angle; on the Northern side of this plateau stands the Prince's cliff. A gallery has been cut along the face of the cliff about 50 feet from the ground; this gallery passes sometimes through tunnels, but for the greater part of its extent is open to the South; very small doors cut into the rock open into large caverns, both from the gallery and also from the ground level beneath, thus forming two sets of caves, one above the other; the length of the gallery is about 600 yards. At the Western end of the gallery a large rock has been quarried out, its Eastern face carved with rows of holes. Many of these artificial caves have rows of mangers in them, and we found in these some holes cut in the rock, evidently to fasten halters to. Hyrcanus seems to have had a very large stable-full of horses, plundered no doubt from the Bedouins. Cave after cave we entered, some stables, some without the mangers, till,

ARAK EL EMIR, THE PRINCES CLIFF THAT FORMED PART OF THE PALACE
OF HYRCANUS, WADY ES SIR.

passing through a tunnel, we came to a causeway descending to the lowest caves. We here found a very large cave with a regular doorway cut into it; entering it, we found a very handsome "room" —that is the only word that expresses it; it was oblong in shape, and lit only by one window over the door, the ceiling was smooth and flat with a cornice all round it, but the floor was irregular, probably from accumulated *debris*, and goat's dung—the caves being, apparently, a favourite haunt of the Bedouin goat-herds. Outside, at some distance up on the right of the window, is a Hebrew inscription, which I photographed; I find, through Sir Edward Maunde Thompson's kindness, this is to be read either as *Aobeh* or *Tobeh*, a proper name. I would suggest that, as Hyrcanus and his brothers were always called the "sons of Tobiah" (really grandsons of Tobiah), it seems to me most probable that these carefully carved Hebrew characters outside the principal cave in the Prince's cliff, indicate simply Hyrcanus' family name. There can be no question that in these caves Hyrcanus had the most delightful retreat in hot weather, the coolness of the atmosphere inside contrasting strongly with the burning heat out. That these remains are the veritable Tyrus, the palace of Hyrcanus, there can I think, be no doubt, Josephus so exactly describes them. Hyrcanus

was the son of Joseph, who lived when Ptolemy Euergetes, King of Egypt, and his wife Cleopatra, daughter of Antiochus, reigned over Celesyria, Samaria, Judea, and Phenicia. Josephus writes: "But upon the death of Joseph, the people grew seditious on account of his sons, for whereas the elders made war against Hyrcanus, who was the youngest of Joseph's sons, the multitude was divided, but the greater part joined with the elders in this war, as did Simon the high priest by reason he was of kin to them. However, Hyrcanus determined not to return to Jerusalem any more, but seated himself beyond Jordan and was at perpetual war with the Arabians, and slew many of them and took many of them captives. He also erected a strong castle and built it entirely of white stone to the very roof, and had animals of a prodigious magnitude engraven upon it. He also drew around it a great and deep canal of water. He also made caves of many furlongs in length by hollowing a rock that was over against him, and then made large rooms in it, some for feasting and some for sleeping and living in. He introduced also a vast quantity of waters which ran along it, and which were very delightful and ornamental in the court. But still he made the entrances at the mouth of the caves so narrow, that no more than one person could enter by them at once, and the

WINDOW AT ARAK EL EMIR. ANCIENT HEBREW INSCRIPTION, TOBEH.

reason why he built them after that manner was a good one; it was for his own preservation, lest he should be besieged by his brethren, and run the hazard of being caught by them. Moreover, he built courts of greater magnitude than ordinary, which he adorned with vastly large gardens, and when he had brought the place to this state, he named it Tyre. This place is between Arabia and Judea, beyond Jordan, not far from the country of Heshbon. And he ruled over those parts for seven years, even all the time that Seleucus was King of Syria. But when he was dead, his brother Antiochus, who was called Epiphanes, took the kingdom. Ptolemy also, the King of Egypt, died, who was besides called Ephiphanes. He left two sons, and both young in age; the elder of which was called Philometor and the younger Physcon. As for Hyrcanus, when he saw that Antiochus had a great army, and feared lest he should be caught by him, and brought to punishment for what he had done to the Arabians, he ended his life, and slew himself with his own hand; while Antiochus seized upon all his substance."*

Hyrcanus must have have been very wealthy, for when Heliodorus, treasurer to Seleucus IV.,

* Josephus Ant. Book 12, Chap. 4, Par. 11.

made the first attempt to secure the treasury of the temple, which included many private deposits. Onias III., the high priest, declared that "there was much money laid up for the relief of widows and fatherless children, and that some of it belonged to Hyrcanus, son of Tobias, a man of great dignity, and not as that wicked Simon had informed, the sum whereof in all was 400 talents of silver and 200 talents of gold."* How Heliodorus was foiled of his booty; terrified by a vision of a horse with a terrible rider, and two young men "notable in strength, who stood by him on either side and scourged him continually, and gave him many sore stripes," till he fell down and was carried off, having taken nothing—may be read in the rest of the same chapter. Truth and fiction closely blended. Whatever his fate, it failed to deter Antiochus the Great, who carried away from the temple a thousand and eight hundred talents, Hyrcanus' fortune included. It is possible that Antiochus may have made Hyrcanus' palace, Tyrus, his residence for a time, and that the Greek games were there performed before him. The Sons of Tobias claimed some sort of descent from the House of David. Hyrcanus was the son of Joseph, the son of Tobias.

* II. Maccabees iii., 10 and 11.

COLUMBARIUM CUT OUT OF SOLID ROCK, WADY ES SIR.

It must indeed have been a lovely place then, with the vast quantity of waters led from the Wady es Sir through the gardens; it is very beautiful now. From here we rode up the Wady es Sir in a North-Easterly direction, and had almost arrived at the place where our camp—which had come by a shorter route—was pitched, when an exclamation from Meshadi made us look up, and on the cliff on our right hand peeping through the trees we saw the front of a house with latticed windows cut in the rock. Crossing the stream we rode up as far as we could, and then had a stiff climb on foot. On reaching the house we found the cliff had been cut back about twelve feet, so as to leave a smooth perpendicular face, a plateau in front, a projection on either side, and a cornice above it; it has three stories, ground, first, and second; the original floors must long ago have gone, but the goat-herds have put some poles across covered with brushwood, making a very insecure platform. A doorway exists leading into the ground floor, but it has obviously been cut into it at a later period, it is only a rough hole broken through, quite different to the carefully carved windows and doorway on the first floor—pivot holes in the rough doorway shew that a door has been fitted to it, and there is a hole for a bolt. Entering this we found two chambers on the ground floor 8 feet

high, 12 feet broad, 36 feet long, united by square doorways shewing the division wall 5 feet thick, both walls and doorways covered with equilateral triangular pigeon-holes arranged in rows; each pigeon-hole 4 inches deep, its sides 8 inches. In the ground floor walls are six rows of holes, above which is a stone shelf to support the beams or floor joists of the room above. At the back of the left room as you enter are the remains of a staircase much broken, the whole cut out from the live rock. We climbed on to the first floor by the aid of a rough tree laid to the doorway, which is between two latticed windows (the original means of entrance must have been a ladder); the lattice work is one foot thick. The plan of the two rooms on the first floor is the same as the ground floor, but there are seven rows of pigeon-holes. The remains of the staircase continue in the left hand room leading to the upper room; climbing up the pigeon-holes inside my son and I got on the second floor. The plan is the same, but there are eight rows of pigeon-holes and two windows in each chamber, the two central windows on this floor being latticed with work one foot thick; the two outer ones have been closed with shutters, as indicated by pivot and bolt holes. The floors have apparently been made of timber, but all else is cut out of the live rock. It must have been constructed

COLUMBARIUM CUT OUT OF LIVE ROCK, WADY ES SIR.

in the Roman time for a columbarium for the ashes of the dead? We looked very carefully round, but could find no remains of cinerary urns. Our camp was pitched, a rifle shot off, in this lovely valley.

I find the Bedouins call the Columbarium Deir es Sir, or the Convent es Sir. It seems curious to have excavated a Columbarium here at so considerable a distance from the great Roman centres of Rabbath and Jerash, unless the Wady was considered sacred. Many Columbaria were the common property of several families; but the heads of great houses sometimes had their own private ones for themselves, their families, and slaves.

There was a charming view from our camp looking South-West. The trees, the bright green of the grass near the water, the Columbarium against the hillside, and a ruined aqueduct that had conducted the water over arches to a long, long ago ruined mill. It would have made a most enchanting picture. Would that one could photograph colour.

CHAPTER V.

Circassian Village of Es Sir—Rabbath of Ammon—Siege of Rabbath by Antiochus — Source of the River Jabbok—Sassanian Building—Dolmens and Menhirs —Rock-cut Tomb.

Our road on the following day continued up the lovely Wady es Sir. On our right hand we passed another chamber with a window and bed or bench cut out in the rock. Arrived at the head of the stream we ascended to the Circassian village of Es Sir. This is the dwelling place of a colony of Mohammedan Circassians, who emigrated from Russia at the time of the Crimean war. They do not bear a good character for honesty; but their village was—from an Eastern point of view—clean, and it certainly was pretty. Leaving the village we emerged on the plain, where we passed many Bedouins of the 'Adwan with camels, goats, sheep, and donkey. The country was—like all the high ground of Moab—rolling undulating plain, which as we approached

Rabbath of Ammon (now called Amman) began to fall towards the Eastward, towards the head waters of the Jabbok, the water-shed of this side of the plateau. We descended the track to the city, the ancient capital of the Ammonites, where the sarcophagus of Og, the king of the Amorite tribe who held Bashan, possibly still remains. Og himself was a survivor of the Rephaim, who with Zuzims or Zamzummims and Emins, sons of the giants, held part of this country from the plain of Kiriathaim to Ashtaroth Karnaim. They were conquered with the Horites who lived in Mount Seir—down South of the Dead Sea—by the confederation of kings: Chedorlaomer, king of Elam; Amraphel, king of Shinar; Arioch, king of Elessar; and Tidal, king of Nations, in the days of Abraham. The races of the giants seem to have been succeeded in these plains by the Moabites and Ammonites, descended from the daughters of Lot. But the warlike tribe of the Amorites—the sons of Canaan, the mountaineers, who in later times were under two kings to the East of Jordan, Sihon and Og, and five kings in the hill country of Judea—seem to have lived here from early time. Both Amorites and Rephaims are mentioned in God's prophecy to Abraham: "Unto thy seed have I given this

land."* When Rabbath is first mentioned in the Bible† it is as the capital of the Ammonites. It is mentioned by Joshua to identify the Northern Aroer, whose site is unknown, from the Southern Aroer, on the river Arnon.‡ When Hanun, king of the sons of Ammon, or, as it would be said now, of the Beni Amman, insulted David's ambassadors, (feeling sure that war must result) he hired troops—Syrians—to the number of 32,000, and the king of Maachah marched down from the lava wastes of Argob with a thousand more, a total force of 33,000 men, who came and pitched before Medeba; and to them trooped the sons of Ammon from Rabbath and their other cities, and garrisoned Medeba, whilst the mercenaries were camped on the level plain outside. Against them marched Joab at the head of the host of the mighty men of Israel, and attacked the Syrians with a picked force led by himself in person; whilst the remainder, under Abishai, threatened the Ammonites drawn up before the gate of Medeba. The Syrians were defeated, and with the Ammonites fled into the city, and satisfied with this qualified success Joab returned to Jerusalem. Then Hadarezer, or

* Genesis xv., v. 18 to 21. † Deut. iii., v. 2.
‡ Josh. xiii., v. 25.

Hadadezza, the son of Rehob king of Zobah (an Aramean kingdom situated between Damascus and the Euphrates) who had before been defeated and spoiled by David, sent for reinforcements from beyond Euphrates, who marched out under Shobach, or Shophach, captain of Hadarezer's host.

This fresh formidable army brought David himself on the scene, for gathering all Israel together, he passed over Jordan, and came upon them somewhere in the plains near Medeba and utterly defeated them. Shobach, the captain of the host, being among the slain. After an interval, Joab was sent with all Israel to besiege Rabbah; the ark of the covenant of God probably going with them. Rabbah, from its strong position, made a stout defence, Uriah the Hittite being killed under its walls with some of the people of the servants of David, too loyal, perhaps, to their gallant comrade to obey the cold-blooded order: "Retire ye from him, that he may be smitten and die." Joab captured the lower city by the Jabbok, the city of waters, and sent to David to come to take the citadel on the hill "Lest I take the city and it be called after my name," who, arriving with reinforcements, stormed and seized the citadel, sacking it, and finding great spoil,

including the crown of Malcham or Melcom, the national god of Ammon, weighing between 100 and 125lbs. weight of solid gold; and, after torturing the wretched inhabitants, returned with all the people to Jerusalem. It fell again into the hands of the children of Ammon. Jeremiah writes: "Concerning the Ammonites thus saith the Lord.....Howl, O Heshbon, for Ai is spoiled; cry, ye daughters of Rabbah, gird you with sackcloth; lament and run to and fro by the hedges, for Melcom shall go into captivity and his priests and his princes together. Wherefore gloriest thou in the valleys, thy flowing valley, O back-sliding daughter."* One of the striking features of Rabbah is its flowing valley, the Wady Zerka, the ancient Jabbok, teeming with shoals of fish. The town received the name of Philadelphia from Ptolemy II. Philadelphus, that Ptolemy, who caused the Hebrew scriptures to be translated into Greek by six elders from each Israelite tribe. It was captured by Antiochus III., the Great, after a long siege, from Ptolemy IV. Philopator, B.C. 217. For on Antiochus "hearing that a strong force of the enemy were concentrated at Rabbatamana, in Arabia, and were pillaging and over-running the territory of those Arabians who had joined him,

* Jerem. xlix., v. 1, 3, 4.

TOWER BY THE RIVER JABBOK, RABBATH OF AMMON.

he threw everything else aside, and started thither, and pitched his camp at the foot of the high ground on which that city stands. After going round and reconnoitring the hill, and finding that it admitted of being ascended only at two points, he led his army to them, and set up his siege artillery at these points. He put one set of siege works under the care of Nicarchus, the other under that of Theodotus, while he superintended both equally, and observed the zeal shown by the two respectively. Great exertions were accordingly made by each, and a continual rivalry kept up as to which should be the first to make a breach in the wall opposite their works, and the result was that both breaches were made with unexpected rapidity, whereupon they kept making assaults night and day, and trying every means to force an entrance without an hour's intermission. But though they kept up these attempts continuously, they failed to make any impression, until a prisoner showed them the underground passage through which the besieged were accustomed to descend to fetch water. They broke into this, and stopped it up with timber and stones, and everything of that sort, and when this was done, the garrison surrendered for want of water."*

* Shuckburgh's Hist. of Polybius, vi., v. 16.

Here, when the city was held by Zeno Cotylas, fled Ptolemy, the son of Abubus, after his treacherous murder of his father-in-law, Simon, the High Priest, son of Mattathias, at Docus, and the torture and murder of Simon's wife and sons at a fortress above Jericho called Dagon. He was chased from the country by Simon's third son, John Hyrcanus, who was made High Priest in his father's room, B.C. 135.† It was taken from the Nabatheans by Cornelius Palma, governor of Syria, in the Emperor Trajan's time, A.D. 106.

In later times it was the seat of a Christian Bishop. Now it is a heap of ruins, with a small Circassian colony, living in houses built with stones taken from temples, theatres, and other buildings. Amman must have been a very beautiful town under the Romans. The principal ruins are the great Theatre on the South side of the river, partly cut out of the hill, that is calculated would have held 3,000 spectators, and a small odeum immediately East of it. On the North side of the river, a street with columns on either side, running East and West, or parallel to the river, a short distance North of the centre of this street, are the remains of a temple, and Westward the ruins of a

† Joseph Ant., Book xii., Chap. 7, Para. 4. Maccabees i., Chap. 16.

TEMPLE, RABBATH OF AMMON.

bath, a basilica, and another building with Corinthian columns. The citadel is built on the hill to the North of the river, and surrounded by a very strong wall. At the summit are bases of some large columns that have been part of a large temple, and a beautiful Sassanian building. Conder has so fully described Rabbath of Ammon* that I feel that the only addition I can make are the photographs that I took of the more interesting ruins. We rode all round the town, and then turning West followed the course of the river up to its source, a strong spring about a mile and a half from Amman. Here we found our camp pitched, and were glad to sit under the shade of our tent, the day having been exceedingly hot. Big cut stones and part of a pavement at this spring, shew that there has been a large building here. The Circassian Kaimakan of Amman provided us with some of his men as guards for the night. Making a start before sunrise on the following day, we again rode round Rabbath of Ammon, seeing on the West and North of the town some very fine dolmens and menhirs. South-West of the town on the top of the adjoining hill, we found a rock-cut tomb that had been covered by a large stone nine feet long. The tomb was cut

* Heth and Moab, by C. R. Conder, R.E.

straight down into the rock that here cropped up to the surface; at a depth of some twelve feet from the surface it opened out into a burial chamber to the East.

SASSANIAN BUILDING ON THE UPPER CITY, RABBATH OF AMMON.

CHAPTER VI.

Es Salt—Jebel Osha—El Bukeia—The River Jabbok—Peniel—Jerash—Magnificent Ruins—Absence of Hassan—Inscriptions—A Bedouin Present—Hassan's Return—A Dangerous Experience—Sarcophagi.

From Rabbath, of Ammon, we rode across the plain in a W.N. Westerly direction, the Bedouins and their flocks and herds and camels had passed, and the plains were deserted as far as the eye could reach, an absolutely treeless country, and a burning sun made us very glad when we scrambled down a steep track and plunged into the vineyards and gardens near the town of Es Salt. How delicious it was to listen to the music of many rills of water led amongst the gardens from the bright stream running down the valley through the middle of the town, and the sound of the breeze through the shade-giving leaves of the fig

trees. How it makes one understand the peacefulness of the expression of how the Israelites in the ancient days "sat each man under the vine" overshadowing his door, and "the fig tree" in his garden. There is an English Mission here, and we called at the house and asked leave to rest there until our baggage arrived. We were most hospitably received and made welcome by a native servant, but were sorry to find that the missionary, the Rev. Mr. Sykes, in charge, was away on leave. "The Saltus Hieraticus," mentioned among episcopal towns in the fifth century, appears, as Dr. Grove points out, to be probably Es Salt. In the twelfth century Salt was a stronghold of Saladin, and its fortress, destroyed by the Mongols, was re-built in the thirteenth century by the famous Bibars*; the fort has been repaired and is now held by the Turks.

The view from the window of the Mission perched up on the side of the hill is very pretty, overlooking the modern town, and with a view right down amongst the vineyards and fig and pomegranate trees. In the foreground stands the minaret of a mosque from the top of which a muezzin was calling the faithful to prayer with sonorous cry—"Allah is great; I testify that

* Heth and Moab, by Conder.

there is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is the prophet of Allah, come to prayer." Uneasy vague reports have reached us of a stirring of fanaticism among the Mussulman population, of Christians being attacked and ill-used, of the Druses having made forays on the villages of the Hauran, of depredations of the Turks on the Beni Sahr, and *vice versa*. When our camp had arrived, we saw a large number of camels, some hundreds, driven to water past our tents by Turkish soldiers, and we were told that these had been captured from the Beni Sahr by the Turks. How much of all this was truth it was impossible to find out. We sent up to the Kaimakan to ask for the usual guards for our camp during the night, and our messenger was roughly refused, the Kaimakan saying, that he, the messenger, "should know that everywhere in the Sultan's territory we were perfectly safe without guards," a statement we took leave to doubt, and told off a guard from our 'Adwan escort for the night. It has been endeavoured to identify Salt with Ramoth Gilead and again with Mahanaim, the latter seems more probable, yet I think the grounds are not sufficient to give any certainty; at about an hour's distance from Salt rises Jebel Osha with the reputed grave of the prophet Hosea. Next day we wound through the valley

among the vineyards, and taking a North East route emerged into the curious valley or plain of El Bukeia surrounded by stony hills; the plain looks with its dark crimson soil exactly as if it had once been a lake; the soil is rich, and it is cultivated in small patches by the Bedouins. Ascending the hills on its Northern side, we followed a little valley for a long distance down, till we came to the spring forming the head waters of the Wady Umm Rumman. Here were a large party of Turcomans with camels, so we moved on farther to Ain Ruiba, an excellent small spring by a large terebinth overlooking the deep Wady of the Jabbok. Under its shade we rested till our baggage came up, and the tents were pitched, and as the black blue night of the East settled on us, with the stars hanging like lamps in the firmament (not like pinholes of light shewing through a black paper), we could see the fires at the Bedouin camps twinkling out on the hills on the far side of Jabbok. A very steep track led us down to Jabbok next day; it is, or was when we crossed, a clear, quickly running stream, about thirty yards across and two feet deep, with a gravel bed thickly bordered on either side with oleanders in full bloom. It was at this river (where the ford was who can tell), at a place afterwards called Peniel (the face of God),

that the mysterious incident in the life of Jacob took place. On the eve of meeting his brother Esau, a powerful chief whom he had deprived of his birth-right, and having sent his people and possessions across the river at night, he "was left alone, and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day, and when he saw that he prevailed not against him he touched the hollow of his thigh, and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint as he wrestled with him." And he said, "Let me go for the day breaketh." And he said, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me." And he said, "What is thy name?" and he said "Jacob." And he said, "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel; for as a Prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed. And Jacob asked Him and said, "Tell me, I pray Thee, Thy name." And He said, "Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after My name? And He blessed him there. And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel; for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved. And as he passed over Penuel, the sun rose upon him, and he halted upon his thigh. Therefore the Children of Israel eat not of the sinew which shrank, which is upon the hollow of the thigh, unto this day; because He touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh in the sinew that shrank," Genesis xxxii.;

and in the Speaker's Commentary note on the same Chapter, and Verse 32, "The custom prevailing among the Jews to this day, of abstaining religiously from eating this sinew, (*i e.*, the sciatic nerve), "seems a lasting monument of the historical truth of this wonderful event in the life of Jacob." This river was the ancient frontier line between Sihon's and Og's Kingdoms. Ascending the hills on the other side we finally swept round the side of a hill, and came in full view of the magnificent ruins of the city of Jerash. The view was most striking. A magnificent Roman Triumphal Arch stood in front of us; further off, a circular forum, surrounded by columns, from which rows of columns stretched as far as we could see. On the left, through the oleander bushes, we caught glimpses of an old Roman Bridge, and the water of the Wady ed Deir falling in cascades on its way to join the Jabbok. Jerash, the ancient Gerasa, was a town belonging to the Decapolis of Perœa. Josephus writes—Book I., Chap iv., Para. 8, of "The Jewish War"—"But Alexander (Janneus), when he had taken Pella, marched to Gerasa again, out of the covetous desire he had of Theodorus's possessions, and when he had built a triple wall about the garrison, he took the place by force." It was taken by Trajan's lieutenant, Cornelius Palma, A.D. 106; and what remains in

TRIUMPHAL ARCH, JERASH.

the present town is wholly Roman, and the ruins are of great buildings of the period of the second century of our era. It undoubtedly must have been a great and most beautiful town, well watered both by the Wady ed Deir, and a very strong and excellent spring near the Northern end of ruins, on the right hand side of the valley. In the time of King Baldwin II., cousin of Baldwin I., mention is made of Gerasa, where "the King of Damascus had caused a castle to be built."

We rode up to the Gateway. It is probably a triumphal arch, as it stands a long way outside the clearly marked city walls, that are still sufficiently intact to enable one exactly to follow their lines. The arch is triple, one large central and two small arches, one on either side. The side farthest from the town has four fine columns with bases carved with acanthus leaves, in the Corinthian manner. Doubtless the capitals (which have gone) were similarly carved. The side arches look as if they had been constructed for the passage of foot passengers, and the central one for wheeled traffic and horses. Over the side arches are square-headed niches, perhaps for statues.

Immediately to the left of the Archway is a very fairly preserved Naumachia, for water shows. The channel conducting the water into it is

well preserved, though now dry. At the end nearest the town the seats are still intact, and here is a wreath carved.

Proceeding straight on from the Triumphal Arch, we came to the line of the town walls, where a gateway must once have stood. Before us stood a semi-circle of columns, with Ionic capitals, supporting an entablature that connected them. From this semi-circle runs a long, straight street, with columns on either side. The street must have been narrow, and the side walks for the foot passengers were between the columns and the houses, most probably forming a covered colonnade right through the centre of the town. It is likely that a gallery ran above the colonnade. This street of columns is cut at right angles by another, also with its colonnade. At the point where they cross each other are the ruins of a Tetrapylon, with carved, shell-shaped niches for statues. Further on, along the main street, we came to some large buildings, both on the right and left, with many columns, mostly fallen. We found the remnants of two large red granite columns, that had evidently been polished, in the right hand building. Looking towards the river from here, we saw the approach leading up from the ruins of a bridge. Between two standing

FORUM, JERASH.

Corinthian columns on the left side of the street is a beautiful ruin, richly carved. On either side of a central circular window are square windows, now walled in, and semi-circular headed niches, probably for statues; above these a rich cornice with pediments, that above the central window being triangular, and those over the niches circular. Below are more niches with the remains of pediments above them. Further on, to the left, are ruins of another richly-decorated building; the carvings, columns, huge stones, and capitals lie heaped up in inextricable confusion. The capitals of the columns to this point since leaving the semi-circle have been Corinthian. Now, as we continue down the main street, passing a theatre on the left, and the baths on the right, the capitals are Ionic. The heat had, by this time, got almost unendurable, and we entered with gratitude the delicious shade of the massive, vaulted, central chamber of the baths, with its four arches that had opened into the rest of the building, which having fallen, gave us a view over the small Circassian settlement to the East of the Wady, to the North towards the Northern Gate, and to the West over the columns that formed the entrance to the theatre for gladiatorial combats. Shortly after, we saw our baggage arrive, and our men set to work to pitch the tents; but the Bedouin escort

with them, instead of as usual hanging dawdling round the tents, came up to where we were, and sat silently outside in the shade of the baths. I noticed that something was wrong, and on our coming to the camp, was told that Hassan, one of the muleteers, had not turned up. In an hour or two, Hassan being still absent, I made enquiries, and after the usual amount of lying, elicited the fact that Hassan had lagged behind the baggage animals, and that passing a patch of Bedouin corn, had stopped, rubbed out some of the grain in his hands, and lit a small fire to parch it. In an instant the corn had caught fire. Directly the escort saw what had happened, they pricked the baggage animals into a gallop with their spears, and away the whole lot had ridden, and they had not seen Hassan again. But they had seen Bedouins galloping and running from every direction towards the fire. The 'Adwan Sheik told me the penalty for setting fire to standing corn, accidentally or not, was death, and that if they had seen the baggage animals near, and had attributed the fire to one of our party, they would certainly have attacked them, but there were so many feuds between themselves, that if they had not caught Hassan, they would attribute the fire to some of themselves. I wanted to go back to try and get Hassan, but both our dragomen and the sheik

RUINED BUILDING, JERASH.

begged me not, saying if he was killed he was dead, and it was his own fault, that I could do nothing, and should only make it clear he belonged to our party, and there would be trouble, and if he had escaped he would come in after dark; anyhow, it was most unadvisable to do anything that day, as it was late. The Circassian Bey came and called on us in the evening, and told off guards to the tents as usual, and walked with us in the cool of the evening through the ruins. His son, a very intelligent lad of about eighteen, came with us, and when I asked about inscriptions, he said he knew of several, one on a stone that had been just got up out of the way in a patch of ground that they had been ploughing. Leading us up out of the upper gate, he took us to a monument quite recently unearthed. The red soil was sticking all over it, and after cleaning it we found that it was a monument erected to a Procurator of the Province of Arabia, and Sabina his wife. Below, in the town, we found some Greek verses, which I copied, though much defaced. Sir Edward Maunde Thompson, on my return, told me that they record the conversion into a Christian church of an old temple, which had fallen into neglect, and had become polluted by animals. This was done by a priest named Aeneas. We then descended to camp, and talked to a fine old

Circassian, who spoke bitterly of their expatriation from the Caucasus, which he evidently considered an earthly paradise. Our 'Adwan escort now came to wish us good-bye, as they had arrived at the frontier of their country. I took the sheik aside, and he promised me, if he had the opportunity, to help Hassan, about whom I was very anxious. We had many parting compliments from our escort, and were quite sorry to wish them good-bye. From here on to Mezarib we shall take an escort of Circassians. One of the Bedouins on going, presented my son with his spear, and I gave him a return present. But the trying thing was when our sheik led his beautiful chestnut mare up, and putting the halter into my hand, made me a present of her, saddle and bridle, and all. Of course it was not meant, so with many thanks I returned her. How I should like to have kept her. She was so sure-footed and gentle, with speed and courage, and the sense of a dog; she sorely tried my innate covetousness. Still no Hassan. Early in the morning, as he was still absent, I sent for my dragoman, and told him that we must now take steps to search for him. He begged me to order the camp to be struck, that we might travel on at once, or trouble would be sure to ensue. Hassan was dead, and we should embroil ourselves with the Bedouins. I have no doubt he was quite right,

but it goes against one to leave one of the servants behind, even though it was the idiot's own fault, so I declined to move, and asked the Circassian Bey to give me a man to guide and escort one of my men to find a man who had been left behind. I obtained the Circassian guard, who carried a perfect arsenal of arms, and the head muleteer started. In an hour and half they came back, Hassan on the muleteer's horse, which the lattter was leading There was great joy in the camp, where Hassan seems to be a general favourite. However, such dangerous stupidness could not be easily passed over, so sending for the dragoman I summoned Hassan before me, and questioned him as to the cause of his absence, which had detained me. He said at first that he had had a violent attack of colic and cramp, but on my telling him not to lie, as it was useless, and I knew all about it, he confessed that he had lit the fire to parch some corn, that a puff of wind had made the corn catch, that he had tried with all his might to beat the fire out, but that it had spread too quickly for him. Hearing the shouts of the Bedouin he ran down the steep hill for the Jabbok, closely followed by two Bedouins. Whilst running for his life down the steep descent he had fallen over some rocks, but had jumped up and got into the thick jungle of oleander bushes before his would-be captors.

Dodging at once to one side, he had lain down motionless amongst their thick tangled branches, while the Bedouins hunted for him, calling more men down to help them. He could hear them looking for him, and vowing they would kill him if they caught him. Finally they gave up the hunt, but he was too frightened to move, and so lay till night came on, and then he was afraid of missing our trail, but before daylight he had started off, and my men met him, and he was lame, and very tired. I told him his carelessness had risked the whole party, and then inflicted a smart punishment on him, and let him go. That evening, on my return to camp, Hassan came and knelt before me, and, attempting to kiss my riding boots, presented me with a large bouquet of oleander blossoms, and declared that I was his father and protector. We spent all day again amongst the ruins, visiting first the theatre near the baths, that probably was used for wild beasts and gladiatorial combats. This theatre is very fairly preserved; there are passages and rooms under the seats. Columns standing in front appear to have been part of the proscenium; their capitals are Corinthian. From here we ascended to the Great Temple. This is a most imposing building, and has been enclosed by huge columns, with exquisitely carved capitals, the acanthus leaves feathering out beautifully lightly. These capitals as we saw

TEMPLE OF THE SUN, JERASH.

from the fallen ones were fair carving, not jointed on with metal plugs, as is the case with many Corinthian capitals at Rome, especially at the baths of Caracalla. At the Western side, the building faces East, is a passage with a small room on either side. It was probably dedicated to the Sun, and is certainly the most beautiful building in Jerash. From here, passing out through the Northern gate, we emerged on the hill above the city, and at a distance of a quarter of a mile from the gate we came to what has evidently been the cemetery of the town. Here, on the top of the ground, are numbers of sarcophagi. We counted fifty where we stood. They are all oblong stone coffins, with lids, and are decorated much in the same way. A riband ring, the ends floating down, and tied in a reef knot; a crescent-shaped ornament with a three-pointed device in the centre, in some instances inside the riband ring, variations of Solomon's seal. These ornaments were on the sides of the sarcophagi—the ends were usually decorated by variations of Solomon's seal. All these had been dug up and ransacked by the Circassians in the hope of finding treasure. I bought from them some perfect glass Khol jars that they had taken from here, one with the bronze spatula in it for applying the khol to the eyes. Thence we descended into the town to the

large theatre at the Southern side. Its back is against the town wall. The seats are well preserved; a gallery divides the upper and lower tiers of seats. In this gallery are small chambers; this gallery communicates with a passage running under the upper seats. The proscenium is entirely ruined, but fallen columns shew it had been much ornamented. Then to another temple near the ruined South gate by which we entered. The roof has entirely fallen in, but the thick stone walls yet outlive the destruction. They have windows and niches for statues, with semi-circular tops. The bases of the columns that formed the portico stand in their places, but the columns with their Corinthian capitals lie in confusion below. The square pillars that decorated the beautifully made wall have also Corinthian capitals. From here we descended to the forum, and riding up the street of columns to the tetrapylon where the cross street cuts it, turned down the hill to the right till we came to the ancient bridge that here spans the stream. It has five arches, one large central one over the river, and two smaller ones on either side to bring the roadway up to the level of the street. The bold arch of this bridge with the oleanders and the rapidly running water below is very picturesque. It is very necessary to be careful in scrambling about these ruins, as snakes are not uncommon. One large one glided away from under a sarcophagus I was engaged in examining.

CHAPTER VII.

A quiet Sunday—Mizpeh in Gilead—The land of Tob—Jephthah — Remtheh — Remtheh Mizpeh — Ramoth Gilead — Beni Sahr camels — Whirlwinds — Syrian Goats—A disturbed Night—The Haj Road—Ancient Aqueduct — Harvest Scene — Edrei — El Mezarib — Strolling Players—Damascus—Meiselun—Lebanon—Beyrout.

The Circassian Bey came again to our tents this evening, and had coffee. He has arranged to send his son, and the son of one of the principal men here, on with us when we leave, as guides and guards ; they are both intelligent lads of about nineteen. The heat has become so great that we arranged to go straight to Mezarib *via* Remtheh. Water, we hear, is very scarce and bad. Next day being Sunday we, as usual, rested, and had chairs and a table taken to the Baths. We were deliciously cool, the thick vaulted roof giving us "the shadow of a great rock." I had, as I often do when I can get it, ordered a sheep from the Circassians, and given it to my

men for their Sunday dinner. We were much amused when the head muleteer came up with salaams to know if Hassan was to have any. I said "yes, of course." He had done very wrong and risked the lives of the whole party, but I had punished him for it, and the matter was finished. Reading service and writing occupied us till the evening, when we rode round the walls on the Eastern side of the town. They enclose a space nearly as large as on the Western side, and are much more perfect ; but the town on this side—being a convenient quarry for the Circassian settlement that lies by the river—is a shapeless mass of ruins. There is a gate on the East side, from which a street led straight down to the remains of the upper bridge, and on straight towards the Temple of the Sun. The view from here, when the city was at its zenith, must have been magnificent. Taking the precaution to take as much water as possible with us from the cool and copious springs, we started with our two young guards, who were loaded with weapons: swords, pistols, and guns, and dressed in black Astrakan lamb's skin caps and black long skirted coats, with rows of silver cartridge cases on their breasts. Keeping on the right of the stream for about a mile from the town, we then turned to our right and ascended the hills till we could see away to Suf, which Conder

considers is Mizpeh in Gilead, where Jephthah had his house (Heth and Moab, p. 176); and the land of Tob, the same high authority says, "survives in the modern name, Taiyibeh, which applies to a village in this direction, and which is radically the same with the Hebrew, signifying 'goodly' or 'fruitful.'" There then probably took place that terribly dramatic incident of Jepthah's life, told in the end of the xi. Chapter of Judges. Jephthah, the son of the Aramean "strange woman" of Tob, having fled to his mother's people from his brothers, his father's sons, was brought back again by the elders of Gilead, on the condition that "if the Lord delivered the Ammonites into his hand he should be their head." He then makes the fatal vow to God, that "If Thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands, then it shall be that whatsoever (or "whosoever," see Note in Speaker's Commentary on Judges xi. verse 31) cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon shall surely be the Lord's, and I will offer it up for a burnt offering."

He smites Ammon from Aroer to Minnith (Minnith is identified by Eusebius with Maanith, four miles from Rabbath) even twenty cities, and

into Abel-Ceramim (identified with an Abel that was situated amongst vineyards seven miles from Rabbath) (see Note, Speaker's Commentary on verse 33 of same chapter). Triumphant and happy he returns to his home, the acknowledged head of Gilead above his brothers, who had taunted him with his origin, and forced him from his father's house, and meets his daughter, his only child, coming to welcome her father with timbrels and dances. And after her touching submission: "My father, if thou hast opened thy mouth unto the Lord, do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth," which must have added to his torture; he, after the two month's respite granted, as the sacred historian (abstaining from dwelling on the terrible deed) writes: "Did with her according to his vow which he had vowed." That is, he offered her up for a burnt offering.

We now descended into a large plain, with some patches of corn, and followed the remains of a Roman road. Then we rode through a narrow gorge, ascending into the Jebel Kafkafa, from the top of which there is an extensive view over the desert. Descending on the other side, we followed the old road down the dry course of the Wady Warran till we emerged on the Hauran

plain, at first uncultivated, but on getting near Remtheh, covered with standing corn that had been ravaged by locusts, in which countless herds of camels belonging to the Beni Sahr were quietly feeding, then Remtheh itself: an extensive mound, on the top of which are the low, flat-roofed houses of the present occupants Remtheh has been identified as possibly Ramath Mizpeh of Joshua xiii., 26 (Heth and Moab, p. 175) As to the question whether it is the site of Ramoth Gilead, we feel that it is strongly probable. Jerash could without doubt have been reached from the Jordan valley by chariots following the course of the Jabbok, as Conder very truly writes ; and that a chariot could have been easily driven from Jerash to Remtheh we had the best possible proof, from the distinct tracks of a Circassian cart that had preceded us along this very road : a wheeled track being so remarkable a thing in this country that we all noticed it. Conder also writes "that the later Jews connect Ramoth Gilead with Jerash," and there is undoubtedly a Roman road between Remtheh and Jerash, which most likely followed the line of a more ancient one. The battle field before Ramoth Gilead, according to the account in I. Kings, xxii. chapter, demands a site where chariots shall take the leading part of the action :

"The King of Syria commanded his thirty and two captains that had rule over his chariots saying: Fight neither with small nor great, save only with the King of Israel." Ahab, King of Israel, is wounded and dies in his chariot, and the chariot with the King's corpse is driven back to Samaria. It is also probable that Ramoth in Gilead was an important frontier town that was taken by Benhadad's father from Omri, the father of Ahab. By the terms of Ahab's covenant with Benhadad, Ramoth in Gilead should have been restored long ere this to Israel. For Benhadad said: "The cities which my father took from thy father I will restore" (I. Kings xx., 34). Hence the strength of the claim expressed in Ahab's words: "Know ye not that Ramoth in Gilead is ours?" that is of right, though the Syrians still hold possession of it. (Speaker's Commentary, Note on verse 3 of I. Kings, xxiii. chapter.) Ramoth Gilead was also the seat of government of Gilead and Bashan. For when Solomon divided his kingdom into twelve provinces, each under its own officer, we read that he appointed "Ben-Geber, in Ramoth Gilead; to him pertained the towns of Jair, the son of Manasseh, which are in Gilead; to him also pertained the region of Argob, which is in Bashan, three-score great cities with walls and brasen bars."*

* I. Kings, Chap. iv., v. 13.

It appears to us that Remtheh fulfils all these conditions. It undoubtedly was a frontier town of Gilead, and the vast plains round it offer a perfect field for a chariot battle. As to the route taken by Ahab's chariots in coming to the assault from Samaria, that is a more difficult question to answer definitely, though there are several roads that he may have taken. It is also a most convenient site to govern Gilead and Bashan from. I think with all deference to other opinions, that Remtheh is the probable site of Ramoth Gilead. The extent of the mound at Remtheh denotes the large size of the ancient town, and the great number of wells and ancient reservoirs round indicate the importance of the site. Most of these wells still hold water, but at the time of our visit there was a great scarcity, and we had much bargaining before we could obtain it for our animals. Pitching our light tent that we took with us for luncheon on the side of the tell in this absolutely shadeless place, we lay panting under its semi-shelter. Countless herds of camels with their Beni Sahr owners kept filing by in detachments, to water at the continuation of the Wady Warran, West of us, where there was, we were told, a pool or water-hole still holding water. Great giants, in the shape of columns of lurid red dust, stalked across the plains from West to East.

One sweeping round the Hill of Remtheh seized our tent, and tore it from our heads, smothering us with dust and dirt. My wife's gauntlet gloves that she had taken off were blown into space, and never recovered. Finally our baggage arrived, and to our great relief the tents begun to be pitched, when upon us came another circular dust storm, and all was laid flat and in confusion again. Finally the camp was set up, and all was secured, and sitting under the shadow of the door of our tents we watched the herdsmen bringing in their flocks of black goats with pendulous ears, and sheep to water. Some of these black goats are excessively handsome animals The colour is by no means a dead black, but a colour largely combined with red, so that the stomach is quite a russet colour. They have straight backs, good shoulders, and are what you would call in a foxhound "good to follow." There is favouritism in all flocks. We noticed that some of the handsomer old nannies pushed their way in and had their first drink, and that they then waited close to the shepherd, who, when the flock was watered, turned to these good-looking ladies, and talking to them, drew them an extra bucketful. Even amongst a flock of Syrian goats, good looks are useful. The scarcity of water seemed much felt here, for we saw some poor women come out

to beg for water; one being refused, and having a copious flow of invective, delivered it in a shrill scream at the top of her voice. I thought it must end in blows, but no, irritated I suppose beyond bearing, the man pushed her away. She thereupon threw away her goat-skin water bag, and sat down and screamed. No one paid her the slightest attention, and discovering this she picked up her property again and walked off to another well, with what results we could not see. Now came round the pariah dogs to lick the puddles in the ancient stone troughs left by the goats and sheep. Poor beasts! they must know what thirst is. And then came the wished-for sunset, but with no apparent alteration of temperature. The sole change was that the mosquitoes began. Finally dozing off to sleep we were awoke by the bang of a gun close to our tents. One of our guards had seen a wolf, or so he said, and had shot at it Just as likely his gun had gone off accidentally. After arranging this matter with the guard satisfactorily, and confident that it would not happen again that that night, I lay down, and after an interval got to sleep, when I was woke by my wife calling out the tent was on fire. There was a big blaze as I sprang to my feet, but it was only the large paper lantern that hung on a pole outside the door of our tent had caught fire, and made a brilliant flare

up. It was a night of heat, mosquitoes, and—as Shakespeare has it—"alarms and excursions." However, we tried to sleep again. I failed at first, but taking refuge in my pipe, dozed off, and was brought to consciousness by the dragoman—"Four o'clock, gentlemen, coffee ready; Hamed ready with water outside." So stepping outside our tents, my son and I had two large jars of cold water poured over each of us, and then dressed and had coffee. After we had breakfasted, we mounted, and riding round the West side of Remtheh found the whole population sleeping out on the ground and on the threshing floors outside the town. It was just before dawn, and they were beginning to stir; I never saw such a sight. We were thankful we were in the saddle, which is beyond the height of the most active hopper of the myriads which must obviously have abounded. In all kinds of clothes, in all kinds of colours, in their day dress (the *chemise de nuit* is unknown to the Eastern), they lay all over the ground on their quilts or mattresses, surrounded by pariahs, fowls, camels, horses, and mules; and so passing on we struck the great Haj Road, marked here and there by a pile of stones indicating the last resting place of a pilgrim who had succumbed on the very eve of his return, in sight of the last camp of the Haj, El Mezarib. The road

itself is a series of ruts like the buffalo trails of North America, worn by the countless feet of pilgrims for centuries. For the black stone at Mecca, with the red one which was removed by Mohammed were important centres of worship in the "times of ignorance," that is before the "coming of the sword of Islam." We crossed the Kanatir Fironi, the old Roman aqueduct leading from the lake El Khab to Gadara, thence passing the Tell with the mud huts of Turra on its summit, from which men, women, and children had just poured down to harvest the gold-coloured wheat crops below. The men with their loins girt, cutting the straws with sharp quick strokes of the sickle, sometimes breaking into a monotonous song, the women binding the corn into sheaves, again others with children following gleaning, and lastly the herds of goats feeding on what remained on the cleared plain, and kept in their places by deftly thrown stones from the herdsmen, over all the owner sitting on his mare encouraging and directing the operations, and the jars with drink to refresh the labourers standing under the shade of any bush they could find. It was a pretty cheerful sight, and we agreed must be a very accurate representation of the harvest in the old Bible days. It brought the story of Ruth vividly before one. Surely that kind looking sheik might well be

Boaz. One could imagine him so easily saying to one of the gleaning girls, "Hearest thou not my daughter? Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens. Let thine eyes be on the field that they do reap, and go thou after them. Have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee? and when thou art athirst, go unto the vessels, and drink of that which the young men have drawn." Then Boaz sleeping at the threshing floor, as we saw apparently all Remtheh doing this morning. We now passed Ed Deraah at some distance East of us, probably the Edrei of the Bible, where Og made his stand against Israel and was defeated. On along the Haj road with its long furrows, where camel after camel and pilgrim after pilgrim have followed each other on their homeward bound route often ill, cholera haunted, fever sticken, death after death decimating the Haj, each dying devotee entirely borne up by the full faith that Paradise was won, and that death on this awful, shadeless, treeless road, was only the portal to never ending bliss in the gardens of the Houris. The fort at El Mezarib now came in view, and turning over a bridge of that order that makes one consider whether it is better to chance the bridge and avoid the mud, or to chance the mud and avoid the bridge;

another turn, and we see a brick and tiled building with square headed glass windows, the railway station of El Mezarib, the terminus of the steam train-line that was to run from Damascus to Haifa through the Hauran. Entering, we found the station master, a Syrian, with his wife and two children, a clerk, and a Zaptieh, who lived here under continual terror of the Bedouins. All, except the Zaptieh, spoke French. They gave us chairs to sit in the shade inside the station looking out on the lake and the island with flat-roofed, low houses that stand on it. The island is connected to the main land by an artificial causeway. Madame, the station master's wife, was full of complaints as to the horrors of El Mezarib, which she said should properly be called El Miserable. Fever was constant, the heat was terrible; the water in the lake, she averred, even rotted clothes if she washed with it. Then she was in terror of the Bedouins, and her children, she said, were always ailing. Drinking water and all necessaries of life were brought them by the one daily train from and back to Damascus. Some itinerant players of no nationality, and dressed in gay-coloured rags, here came up and asked to be allowed to perform before us. The instruments were curious, and of odd tones; the tunes still stranger. Finally, an

old hag commenced dancing before us with the usual odd swayings and shakings, this I had to stop, and, giving them some small coins, they departed. We lazily watched the Chef de Gare and his clerk most leisurely moving one or two cases of luggage, till the clerk got his finger pinched, this stopped all further pretence of work until the interest displayed in my bandaging up the injured finger had subsided. Madame's children, little girls of about five and six with great black eyes like sloes, had been playing round us, and talking to us all this time merrily enough; but then the youngest child went and lay down on a box and got very dull, and in an hour a pink flush came all over the child's cheeks: it was an attack of fever. Madame took the child off, and laid it on its bed; it was too hot, poor little thing, to put it in it I offered castor oil and quinine, but the poor woman thanked me and said they always had them—they could not exist at Mezarib without them Finally in came the train, carrying, as far as we could see, little else but a cask of water and a few necessaries from Damascus for the station. The guard was so kind to poor madame and so sympathetic about "la petite," and then in about half an hour we rolled off from El Miserable, leaving poor madame with tears in her eyes, and Monsieur, and the

clerk, and the Zaptieh all waving their hands to us. One's heart quite went out to the poor station master and his wife and their little children left at this most odious of feverish holes. So from the midst of Bedouins and Circassians, from Ramoth Gilead and Roman remains, and ancient sites, we are rolling away in a clean, but awfully hot, first-class carriage to Damascus, with our two dragomen and cook safely stowed in a second-class compartment behind us. Our heavy luggage was sent on with the mules, and arrived two days and a half after us. These plains were certainly getting too hot to be pleasant. Slowly—but certainly not steadily—we steamed along with many jolts and jars past old-world, ruined, walled towns on the plain to the watered, willow-waving El Kisweh, and thence at an increased pace down to Damascus through the thick foliage of gardens, till we arrived at the station, where odd carriages with much odder pairs (if the word is not mis-applied) of horses took us to the shelter of Besraoui's Hotel, all, especially my son, well tired out. Next day we called on Mr. Eyres at the Consulate, and were very sorry to find him laid up, and Mrs. Eyres away in England. In the evening, walked through the cool bazaars. On the day following my son had a slight attack of fever, but Dr.

Smith soon put him fairly right. There has been and is, for some unknown reason, considerable ferment amongst the Mussulman population here against the Christians: they had gone to the lengths of calling a meeting to know whether they should not assist the Government by rising and killing the Christians. Some of the older heads recommended the meeting to remember what was the result of the massacre of the Christians in 1860, and wiser counsels prevailed. But it is obvious, and even marked in the streets, that fanaticism, whatever may be the cause, has gained ground since we were here last year. We sent our train with tents and baggage on to Meiselun, and drove after it in the evening in a good carriage hired at Damascus. The cutting for the new railway is finished in the gorge, and has much spoilt the beauty of that lovely place. Crossing the little Zahr (or Sahara) above, we saw an antelope about 500 yards off, and stopping the carriage, my son and I tried a simultaneous long shot with no result beyond sending a skip of sand up on each side of him, and making him go off at a gallop. Next day being Sunday we rested;—a real rest in the delicious cool mountain air, and the day following rode during the cool, and then drove when the sun got hot to Shtaura where we camped, and

then rode up to the top of Lebanon, and had the glorious view over the Western sea. Then entering our carriage we drove into Beyrout, where we found the English fleet, seventeen sail, anchored in the roads ; and I was delighted to meet my old shipmate, Admiral Domville, who is second in command. We put up as usual at the Hotel Oriental. After packing and giving presents to our servants, who on these occasions having divested themselves of their travelling kit, in which they look like a veritable set of brigands, and arrayed themselves in silken robes, so that (with clean hands and faces, and newly-shaved cheeks and heads—to say nothing of the princely garments), one hardly knows them, we in the evening embarked on board the Austrian Lloyd steamer "Aurora," bound to Jaffa and Port Said, thankful that we have again been allowed to achieve our journey in health, and with safety.

Bennion, Horne, Smallman, & Co., Limited,
Printers,
Market Drayton, Newport, Shifnal, and Stone.

1896.

DS
1532
P43

THE LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
Santa Barbara

THIS BOOK IS DUE ON THE LAST DATE
STAMPED BELOW.

Series 9482

AA 000 874 242 1

3 1205 02528 2094